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UP THE NIGER
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم صلى الله على النبي الكريم

UP THE NIGER.

Yours ever
Claude Macdonald

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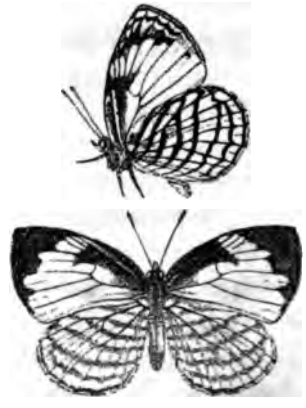
UP THE NIGER.

NARRATIVE OF
MAJOR CLAUDE MACDONALD'S MISSION TO THE NIGER
AND BENUE RIVERS, WEST AFRICA.

BY

CAPTAIN A. F. MOCKLER-FERRYMAN, F.R.G.S. F.Z.S.
OXFORDSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY.

TO WHICH IS ADDED
A CHAPTER ON NATIVE MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS
By CAPTAIN C. R. DAY.



PENTILA FERRYMANI.

With Map, Illustrations, and Appendix.

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TO

Sir CLAUDE MAXWELL MACDONALD, K.C.M.G.

H.B.M.'s Commissioner and Consul-General, Oil Rivers Protectorate.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF MANY PLEASANT MONTHS

SPENT IN AFRICAN WATERS,

This Book

IS DEDICATED

BY HIS PRIVATE SECRETARY,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

In the following pages, an attempt has been made to give an account of the last Government Mission to the Niger River. The causes which led to the despatch of the mission were many and various, though perhaps of little real interest to the ordinary reader. Complaints had been made by foreigners and others against British subjects in this part of Africa; the Royal Niger Company had been taxed with exceeding the powers vested in it by its charter, and it was supposed that the general state of affairs in the Niger Territories was not altogether satisfactory. Her Majesty's Government therefore, being responsible for the conduct of its subjects, deemed it advisable to send out a Commissioner to make formal inquiries on the spot, and, for this purpose, Major Claude MacDonald left England in the latter part of June 1889. He was instructed, amongst other things, to hold personal interviews with all the emirs, kings, and chiefs of the rivers Niger and Benue, over whom the Royal Niger Company claimed jurisdiction; to examine the administration of the aforesaid company, and to visit the city of Ilorin, in Yorubaland, with the object of inducing the Ilorins to agree to a treaty of peace with the Ibadans.[1]

[1] This undertaking was entirely distinct from the main object of the mission, and was purely for the benefit of the colony of Lagos, whose trade had for many years suffered considerably from the effects of interior warfare.

The greater part of our time was naturally devoted to the most important object of the mission, viz., the inquiry into the working of the Royal Niger Company; and as we were continually on the move, inspecting stations and interviewing chiefs, there was little leisure for sport of any kind.

The origin and growth of the first British chartered company in Africa is somewhat remarkable; and in these days, when British companies, with and without charters, are breaking fresh ground all over the Dark Continent, a summary of events which have resulted in the trade of one of the largest rivers of Africa falling into the hands of British merchants may be worthy of record.

A century ago, little was known about the Niger; no European had yet set eyes on it, its course was untraced, and its mouth undiscovered. Numerous attempts were made to reach the river, about which the natives gave such glowing accounts, but it was not until 1796 that Mungo Park, journeying from Gambia, first encountered the mighty waters, at a place called Segu, to the south-west of Timbuktu; the story of his discoveries and of his subsequent death, at Boussa, is too well known to need mention here.[1]

From 1822 to 1828, Laing, Denham, Clapperton[2] and others sought to continue the discoveries made by Park, but with small result as far as the course and termination

[1] *Vide* "Mungo Park and the Niger," by Joseph Thomson.

[2] "Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa, in the years 1822, 1823, and 1824," by Major Denham, F.R.S., Captain Clapperton, and the late Dr. Oudney (1828); "Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa, from the Bight of Benin to Soccatoo," by the late Commander Clapperton, of the Royal Navy (1829).

of the Niger were concerned. In 1830, however, the two Landers solved the mystery by descending the river from Boussa to the Nun mouth.[1]

In the following year some Liverpool merchants equipped an expedition for the further exploration of the Niger, and despatched it thither under Messrs. Laird and Oldfield. But sickness fell on them, and, of forty-nine Europeans who accompanied the expedition, only nine lived to return to England in 1834; Richard Lander, Clapperton's faithful servant, losing his life through the treachery of the natives.[2]

In 1836, 1840, and 1845, Mr. Beecroft[3] explored the various mouths of the river, and reached a point midway between Rabba and Boussa.

In 1841 the British Government sent out an expedition under Captain Trotter and Commander Allen, with instructions to endeavour to establish a model farm at the confluence of the Niger and the Benue, and to open up trade with the natives; this expedition, however, also suffered severely from the climate, losing 48 white men out of 145 in sixty-four days.[4]

Little was done after this until 1854, when Mr. MacGregor Laird, assisted by the Admiralty, despatched the *Pleiad*,[5] under Dr. Baikie, R.N., to explore the Benue River, and to

[1] "A Voyage down the Dark River," by Richard and John Lander (1832).

[2] "Expedition into the Interior of Africa, by the River Niger," by MacGregor Laird and R. A. K. Oldfield (1837).

[3] *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, vol. xi., 1841, and vol. xiv., 1844.

[4] "A Narrative of the Expedition sent by Her Majesty's Government to the River Niger, in 1841," by Captain W. Allen, R.N. (1848); "Journals of the Rev. J. F. Schön and Mr. Samuel Crowther" (1842).

[5] "Narrative of an Exploring Voyage up the rivers Kwora and Binue, in 1854," by W. B. Baikie (1856); "Narrative of the Niger, Tschadda, and Binue Exploration," by T. J. Hutchinson (1855).

endeavour to effect a junction with Dr. Barth,[1] who, in 1849, had left Tripoli (with Richardson and Overweg), working his way across the desert to Lake Tsad or Chad and the Benue River.

The partial success of this expedition induced Mr. Laird to make further attempts for developing trade in these regions; and, in 1857, legitimate trade in the Niger may be said to have commenced, though it received a severe check by the death of Mr. Laird, three years later.

The West African Company (Limited), commenced operations in 1865, and shortly afterwards the firms of Messrs. Holland, Jacquer, & Co., Alexander Miller Brothers, and of Mr. Pinnock, established themselves in the river, followed a little later by the Central African Company. Trade, however, did not seem to prosper until 1879, when an amalgamation of firms took place under the title of the United African Company, under whose auspices trading stations were erected on land, and business commenced in earnest.

The French, who had been watching events in the Niger with interest, now put in an appearance in the shape of two companies, the Compagnie Française de l'Afrique Equatoriale and the Compagnie du Sénégal et de la Côte Occidentale d'Afrique. This foreign invasion spurred the Liverpool merchants to greater activity, and out of their hitherto small venture arose, in 1882, the National African Company, with a capital of a million sterling; the French firms were bought out, treaties were made with the native tribes, and the British merchants found themselves masters of the situation.

In June 1885 the British Government proclaimed a

[1] "Travels in North and Central Africa," by Dr. Barth (1857).

protectorate over the Niger districts, from Lagos to the Rio del Rey on the coast, as far as Lokoja on the Niger and as far as Ibi on the Benue, and furthermore over all such places as might eventually come under the jurisdiction of the National African Company.

In July 1886 a charter[1] was granted to the National African Company, and a little later in the same year its name was changed to the Royal Niger Company (Chartered and Limited), with Lord Aberdare and Sir George Goldie (then Mr. Goldie Taubman) at its head in England, and Mr. David M'Intosh in the Niger Territories. To the exertions of the latter is mainly due the rapid progress which the company has made in the direction of trade with the natives. David M'Intosh was a man of indomitable pluck and energy, who left no stone unturned in furthering the interests which he had at heart; his power and name were such that, even now, when he has been absent from the river for some years, the natives of the most remote tribes speak of him with the greatest respect, and know the white traders only by the title of "M'Intosh men."

Such is the brief history of the discovery and opening up of the Niger River;[2] and the greatest pessimist must allow that here, at any rate, British merchants have not been slow

[1] *Vide* Appendix.

[2] The derivation of the word Niger is uncertain. Ptolemy called the river *Nigeir*, and other ancient writers *Niger*, as they also called the Congo *Gir*. Modern writers maintain that the name has no connection with the Latin *niger*, black; and Dr. Browne, in the "Story of Africa and its Explorers," says, "It is most likely derived from the same root as the Berber *Ghir*, to this day applied to various streams in North Africa." Whatever the origin of the word, it is certain that nowhere along its course is the river known to the natives by any name resembling Niger. The people on its banks apply to it such names as Joliba, Kworra, Ujimini, &c., most of which signify in the language of the various tribes "great water."

in their operations. Seldom has a country been developed more rapidly, and never, I may say, has a trading enterprise had more difficulties to contend with.

African travels of the present day have become so replete with startling adventures that I have many misgivings lest my plain narration of facts shall be deemed excessively dull reading; yet, in our journey of upwards of 3000 miles, I can truthfully chronicle nothing of a blood-curdling nature. I have endeavoured to describe the countries passed through, and the natives met with, as they appeared to me at the time, and with this object in view I have adhered almost entirely to the original entries in my diary. It has been the custom of late years to consider everything pertaining to the West Coast of Africa as unworthy of notice—possibly from this cause the literature relating to the Niger is somewhat out of date—it is therefore more in the hope of filling up the details than for any other reason that the accompanying narrative has been written. Should my humble efforts tend in the slightest degree to attract again the public attention to regions which, half-a-century ago, were the "rage" of Europe, I shall consider myself more than fortunate.

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UP THE NIGER.

CHAPTER I.

THE LOWER NIGER.

THE outward voyage usually occupies a number of the opening pages of a book of travel, though it seems an unnecessary tax on the patience of the reader to force him to wade through uninteresting accounts of the build of the steamer or the doings of one's fellow-passengers at the various ports of call on the voyage out; for who cares to hear of what a certain lady did at Flushing, or a certain gentleman at the Canary Islands, or how often a certain baby cried on board, when one has settled down to read of the ways of the world in a remote part of Africa? We will therefore get over the ground as quickly as possible, and make no mention of the pleasures, troubles, and vicissitudes of the journey.

Our party, which consisted of the Commissioner, his private secretary, and a worthy African clerk named Baddoo, on arrival at Las Palmas, quitted the Cape mail and proceeded in one of the West African boats, anchoring on the night of the 6th July in African waters off the little French possession of Gorée Island. A few hours' steam brought us from Gorée along the coast and up the Gambia River to Bathurst, interesting only as being the place whence the immortal Mungo Park started a century back on his travels to discover the river which forms the subject of these

pages. At Sierra Leone—"the white man's grave"—we left the trading steamer which had brought us thus far, to continue its weary way, calling at all the little ports along the coast, for H.M.S. *Brisk* was awaiting the Commissioner's arrival, and in her we steamed away direct for Accra on the Gold Coast, where we were to pick up Haussa interpreters. Two days later we were passing the Nun mouth of the Niger, where we expected to find a vessel waiting to take us over the bar, which would not admit of the *Brisk* entering the river; some mistake, however, had occurred, and we were forced to proceed to the nearest port, whence we could be transhipped to our destination; so on the evening of the 19th July we were making for Bonny, a trading station adjacent to New Calabar, in the Niger Protectorate.

At daybreak, on July 20th, we entered the Bonny River, and a little later anchored off the trading-station of the European merchants.

Bonny [1] is, at first sight, as ghastly a looking spot as can well be imagined, and it does not much improve on further acquaintance. On the left bank of the river of the same name, and a few miles from its mouth, half-a-dozen English merchants have erected their wooden trading-stores, or, as they term them, *factories*, all built on one plan—a shop on the ground floor and the dwelling apartments above; the land around these structures for a hundred yards or so is cleared, and, where not under water, is packed with palm-oil casks awaiting shipment to England. Beyond the clearance, dense bush and impassable mangrove swamps stretch no one knows how far, and no one cares to know, the one object of the white man being to spend his time in bartering his cotton and other goods for palm-oil, and to make as much money as he can before his health forces him to return to

[1] The native name is Obáne, Ebáne, or Ibáne.

England. The monotony of the life must be terrible—no amusement and no exercise—and small wonder that, at the end of eighteen months, the trader finds himself worn out and debilitated with fever to such an extent as to make further stay on the coast dangerous to health.

Bonny is one of the most important of the trading stations of the Oil Rivers, receiving as it does most of the trade of New Calabar and the surrounding country. We spent four days here, and paid visits to the native town and the missionary establishment beyond; the former in filth would compete with any place in the world, and the latter is a veritable oasis in the desert of mire. Leaving the traders' "beaches," a narrow path conducts us past the small English burial enclosure, where lie the remains of, alas! many of our countrymen who have fallen victims to the fatal climate, on through fœtid swamps and heavy bush, and a few hundred yards brings us to the town itself. A collection of about a couple of hundred ramshackle huts, irregularly built of mud and matting, stands amongst a grove of magnificent trees, with here and there a dense undergrowth of noxious mangrove. "Square-face" gin-bottles lie scattered about the ground in all directions, showing too clearly the inclinations of the repulsive-looking inhabitants—a people saturated with the foulest of trade-gin—and a few old rusty guns, half buried in the swamps, complete the scene. Such is Bonny Town, whose king, as Burton tells us, succeeded thirty years ago in inducing the benevolent Christians of England to interest themselves to the tune of £20,000 in his behalf, providing him with a steam-launch and various English officials for his *court*, and immortalising his majesty in a hymn commencing—

"Oh, who shall succour Bonny's king?"

The money went chiefly in drink, and the duped officials

were only too glad to return at once to England without their salaries.

A pleasant change indeed is it, after leaving the squalid native dwellings, to come on the small clean settlement of the Church Missionary Society, half a mile nearer the sea, where the Bishop of the Niger, Samuel Adjai Crowther, and his son, the Archdeacon, have their headquarters, and are striving hard to civilise the miserable heathens.

The life of the worthy Bishop has been one full of incident. A native of Oshogun, in the kingdom of Yoruba, Adjai, as he was then called, at the age of thirteen [1] was captured by the Felatah, and carried away into slavery to the town of Isehun, where he was separated from his mother and became the property of the chief, only, however, to change hands almost immediately; for, having been bartered for a horse, he was marched in a "gang" to a neighbouring slave-market, much frequented by the large dealers. Here, to his intense delight and astonishment, he encountered his mother, and had the satisfaction of living in daily intercourse with her for three months. The time came, however, when they were again to part, as both thought, for ever; the boy was sold and carried away towards the coast, and, after a varied experience of masters, found himself at length working in a store at Lagos. Again he was destined to move, being shipped, with 180 fellow-slaves, by a slave-dealer, for America; but, shortly after leaving the coast, two English cruisers hove in sight and succeeded in capturing the slaver, and carried off the human cargo to be freed at Sierra Leone. Adjai was received into the Mission School, and taught the trade of a carpenter; he showed himself to be diligent in study, and was baptized at the end of 1825, assuming the name of Samuel Crowther. At the age of eighteen he visited England, where he remained rather less

[1] 1821.

than a year, when, returning again to Sierra Leone, he became one of the first students at the Fourah Bay College, and afterwards an assistant teacher at the same establishment. In 1841 Mr. Crowther accompanied the British Expedition sent out to open up the trade of the Niger, which ended so disastrously, after which he again visited England, studied at the Islington Missionary College, and was ordained by the Bishop of London. He returned in 1843 to the West Coast, to engage in active missionary work; and, while at Abeokuta, in Yoruba, a few years later, he accidentally met his mother in the market-place, after a separation of five-and-twenty years; he thus describes the meeting in his journal:—

"When she saw me she trembled. She could not believe her eyes. We grasped one another, looking at each other with silence and great astonishment, big tears rolling down her emaciated cheeks. A great number of people soon came together. She trembled as she held me by the hand, and called me by the familiar names by which I well remember I used to be called by my grandmother, who has since died in slavery. We could not say much, but sat still, and cast now and then an affectionate look at each other, a look which violence and oppression had long checked, an affection which had been nearly extinguished by the long space of twenty-five years. My two sisters, who were captured with us, are both with my mother, who takes care of them and her grandchildren in a small town not far from here, called Abaka."

Mr. Crowther accompanied two more expeditions to the Niger,[1] and in 1864 was consecrated first Bishop of the Niger in Canterbury Cathedral, the University of Oxford, about the same time, conferring on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.[2]

[1] In 1854 and 1857. [2] Bishop Crowther died at Lagos in December 1891.

Considering that the natives of these parts have held intercourse with white traders for two centuries or more, it is almost impossible to believe the state of utter degradation in which they still remain, though doubtless their miserable physique and their low moral condition is the result of the enormous consumption of vile spirits which have been forced upon them from time immemorial by the trader. Jujus, fetish worship, and even cannibalism are still practised within a few miles of Bonny. The priests, or juju-men, are obliged at certain periods to eat human flesh, and slaves are captured and sacrificed for that purpose; but perhaps the most barbarous practice of any is that which takes place on the death of a chief, and which was, a short time previous to our visit, actually witnessed by two English traders within a day's journey of Bonny. The chief of the town had died, and, according to custom, his wives, five in number, as well as a considerable proportion of slaves, were placed alive in the grave of the chief, their wrists and ankles having been broken so that they should not escape from their awful lingering death, while around the grave, which was a huge open pit, were stationed guards with massive clubs, ready to strike down any one attempting to crawl out; human flesh was being freely eaten by the frenzied juju-men, and the Englishmen fled the scene in horror.

During our stay in Bonny, an interesting ceremony took place, when the Opobo, New Calabar, and Bonny chiefs held a "palaver for peace." These three tribes had had constant feuds for some time amongst themselves, and had been disarmed as far as possible by the English men-o'-war on the station; but, to satisfy themselves that they now possessed no arms and intended to remain at peace, the chiefs assembled to swear together, or, as they term it, "swap juju." All the forenoon a multitude of large canoes, covered with

gaudy bunting and propelled by numbers of almost naked slaves, shouting in time to the dip of their paddles, entered the Bonny River from the Opobo Creek and the New Calabar River, and drew up on the shore above the factories. Early in the afternoon the chiefs, dressed in their best, proceeded to the palaver-house, where the ceremony took place. It was of short duration, and merely consisted of an address from the head chiefs and the offering up of juju to their gods, each party vying with the other to offer the strongest juju, or that which they considered would have most weight with their fetishes. The men of New Calabar poured out libations of trade gin as their peace-offering, while the chiefs of Opobo had provided themselves with a human leg sewn up in cloth, which was no doubt considered by all present as the stronger juju of the two, for, on the conclusion of the palaver, the New Calabar men hurried home, to all appearances thoroughly scared, and the fear of bringing down the anger of their gods upon their heads will probably prevent them in the future from picking a quarrel with the men of Opobo.

These chiefs, or "kings" as they delight to be called, are powerful men in the land, and the whole trade of the country passes through their hands. They are the middlemen of the palm oil trade, and send their domestic slaves into the interior to buy up the oil from the natives and then barter it for English goods with the white traders. The system is one of trust, the king being allowed to keep a running account, and usually being well in the debt of the white man.

Leaving Bonny at daybreak on July 24th, in one of the Liverpool trading steamers, we crossed the bar at the entrance of the Nun mouth[1] of the River Niger about

[1] This mouth of the river is the largest and most used for navigation. The other mouths are :—On the west, Forcados, Ramos, Dodo, Pennington (called

mid-day, and shortly afterwards were alongside the little iron jetty of Akassa, where we were received by the head officials of the Royal Niger Company and a guard of their local police. Akassa is the depôt station for the whole of the Niger territories, and it is here that the Liverpool trading steamers discharge their English goods for the river and load up again with native products. The place presents a busy appearance, ocean and river steamers coming and going every day. Kroomen—pictures of strength—are seen rolling huge casks of palm oil along the wharf, or carrying mighty pieces of ivory to the ships; Accra coopers are plying their trade and forming the bundles of "shooks" into casks, and bustle and hurry is the order of the day. Viewed from the water there is something of the picturesque about the station, with its bright green surroundings and its background of sombre, impenetrable forest. Along the beach lie, half buried in the sand, the remains of many an old hulk and steam-launch, left here to afford protection to the land from the incursions of the tide, whilst close at hand rise up long rows of corrugated iron stores, filled with products awaiting shipment. Passing the store-sheds we come to the library and billiard room, close to the water's edge, where the European agents indulge in their only recreation, for, like Bonny, there is nowhere to ramble beyond the narrow limits of the station. A little further on stand the quarters of the Company's officials, a long, wooden, barrack-like building, constructed on piles in such a situation as to catch every breath of wind that blows from the sea: and around this temporary home of the white exile

after a naval officer of the surveying ship *Avon*, who was murdered here in 1846), Middleton (after a surgeon of the *Avon*), and Winstanley Outfalls (after another murdered man of the *Avon*). On the east, Brass (known to the Portuguese as Rio Bento), St. Nicholas, St. Barbara, St. Bartholomew, Sombrero, New Calabar, and Bonny. The two latter, although connected with the Niger, have distinct sources.

an attempt has been made to please the eye in the shape of a garden, but the grass grows coarse and lank and nothing seems to thrive. A pair of tame crested cranes[1] hold sway on the so-called lawn, and afford us immense amusement with their curious circling dances and their bitter hatred for some muscovy ducks, whom they will not permit to trespass on their domain. A damp heat, not unlike that of Lower Burmah, and an air laden with the pestilential vapours from the surrounding mangrove swamps, make the climate of Akassa enervating and unhealthy to a degree, and few Englishmem can battle with it for any length of time; consequently there are few permanent residents in the place, though the quarters are usually fully occupied by men homeward and outward bound. A cool breeze blows in from the sea every afternoon, which has obtained the name of "the doctor," but it is open to doubt if its effects are altogether beneficial to the heated bodies which lie gasping for it.

The native village of Akassa lies nearer the sea, and on the opposite side of the river; there is little intercourse between the English settlement and the inhabitants, who are a slight built and active people, speaking the Brass language and employing their time chiefly in fishing and agriculture. Though, in former days, they were considered savage and dangerous, ever on the look-out for wrecks on the bar at the river's mouth, now they appear to be quiet and inoffensive. Their huts, which are small and quadrangular in shape, constructed of palm fronds and thatched with palm leaves, are crowded together in small clearings among the mangroves.

We made as short a stay as possible at Akassa, only in fact of sufficient length to complete our arrangements for the ascent of the river. A river steamer had been

[1] Or crowned crane (*Balearica pavonina*).

placed at our disposal, and our plans were briefly these—to steam ahead as quickly as possible to the highest navigable point on the Benue River (some 900 miles from the sea), thence to make a dash in a small launch up the Kebbi River and endeavour to find a waterway to Lake Tsad, descending the Benue again before the fall of the water. Making a fresh departure from the confluence of the Niger and Benue, we proposed to ascend the Middle Niger or Quorra (Kwóra), as far as Boussa, then returning to Shonga, to make the overland journey through Yorubaland to Ilorin, and afterwards to descend the main Niger at leisure. How far our plans were carried out these pages will show. The time chosen for the Commissioner's tour was the wet season, when the rivers would be in full flood, and the climate healthy;[1] experience of former expeditions had proved the latter to be the case, for Dr. Baikie's voyage up the Niger in the *Pleiad* was made at this time of year, and the health of his white crew was all that could be desired. Tornadoes, of course, are unpleasant, but can be endured when it is felt that they leave the air behind them cool and freed from malaria germs.

Early on July 26th we were on the move, and by 9 A.M. our river steamer, the *Boussa*, was under way, with the Union Jack flying at the mast, receiving a salute of one gun and a hearty cheer from the Liverpool steamer *Roquelle*, as we passed up the river.

It is customary under these circumstances, according to the accounts of expeditions starting up the "Dark Water," to sit down and reflect on the number of lives of brave English-

[1] The seasons in these regions may be summed up as follows:—December, January and February, the Harmattan or dry season which, though cool, is considered unhealthy; March, April and May, hot and dry, and fairly healthy; June to September, the rainy season (heaviest rain in July and August); the latter part of September is usually fine, and in October and November there are heavy thunderstorms or tornadoes, which do much damage to property.

men which have been sacrificed in its exploration, and to wonder how many of the present party will return to see Akassa; we, however, took a more prosaic line, and reflected that we had had no breakfast, and that it was awaiting us in the saloon, and therefore proceeded at once to test the powers of the Accra cook in the making of "palm-oil chop,"[1] and left the ponderings on the past to take care of themselves. The *Boussa*, which is to be our home on the water for some time to come, is a two-decked steamer (about 400 tons), with double stern wheels, and draws about six feet of water. On the upper deck is a comfortable little saloon and our cabins behind, with a spacious awning-spread deck all around; while the lower deck is occupied with the engines and huge piles of firewood, amongst which the crew (Kroomen) and the constabulary guard find nooks wherein to dwell.

On leaving Akassa the river narrows to a few hundred yards, flowing through densely matted forests of the handsome though deadly mangrove. A few miles further up the mangrove gives place to palm, bombax, and numerous other trees, growing in tropical luxuriance down to the very water, while here and there small clearings in the forest, and plantations of bananas and sugar-cane show that native habitations are at hand, though invisible from the river. Very little of interest, however, attracts our attention for the first few hours, as the *Boussa* ploughs stolidly along against the stream; occasionally we catch a glimpse of a small group of square huts of mud and leaves on the bank, whose wild-looking and scantily clothed inhabitants turn out to greet us with shouts and skaking of fists—their form of salutation—and occasionally a snap shot is got at a

[1] For the uninitiated I may mention that palm-oil chop is the staple food of both Europeans and natives on the West Coast; it consists of lumps of meat and yam swimming in palm oil, the whole being seasoned until it resembles a good hot Madras curry.

crocodile lying basking on the mud, but for the most part the scenery is monotonous, a wall of dark forest shutting out the view on either side of the river.

Dropping anchor, in the afternoon, at Ekow, on the right bank, we made our first acquaintance with a Niger Company's trading station, separated from the native village by a light stockade of palm fronds. This station, like Ekole, Sabogreia, and Agberi, higher up on the opposite bank, is a fair sample of an unimportant trading port, presided over by a native agent, and consists of a couple of iron store-sheds, in which are stored the native products as they are brought in, and a comfortable mud-and-wattle dwelling-house, well thatched with the long reedy grass of the country, to resist the heat of the sun and the deluging rain which swamps everything at this time of year. The sleek and polite agent, a native of Sierra Leone, lives with his family in tolerable ease and comfort, and is a great man in the eyes of the surrounding aborigines; his days are spent in the little shop attached to his house, bartering gaudy Manchester cotton wares for palm oil, and tending the fowls and pigeons in his yard. The labours of the day concluded, he spends his evenings with his wife in the drawing-room, in the enjoyment of "Hymns, Ancient and Modern" on the harmonium, surrounded by the whole Royal Family of England, as represented by the numerous cheap coloured prints which decorate his walls.

The country round Ekow is flat and swampy, and for miles to the westward is intersected by innumerable small creeks or streams, all finding their way eventually into the sea, by one or other mouth of the great river. Numerous villages are scattered about this uninviting district, whose semi-savage population belongs chiefly to the Oru or Idzo tribe, speaking the same language as the people of Brass.

The physique of this tribe, like most others in the Delta, is poor. The men and women are tattooed freely over arms and chest, and their tribal mark appears to be a deep incision straight down the forehead and nose. For clothes they wear merely a strip of cotton stuff hanging loose from the waist to the knee. Both men and women pay much attention to hair-dressing; in the former the head is shaved in curious patterns, somewhat resembling a miniature chess board, small bits of wool carefully greased standing erect in each square, while the lady wears her wool in half-a-dozen conical tufts, three or four inches high, and stiffened with oil and clay, which adds not a little to her natural hideousness. There is little to admire about these people —in fact there is *nothing;* though not cannibals, they indulge in many vile pagan customs and regard the white intruder with no great amount of affection.

Leaving the Oru country at Agberi, the river widens considerably, and the Wari branch is seen flowing away to the westward, a magnificent sheet of water, a thousand yards or so in width. We now enter the country of the once powerful Ibo tribes,[1] whose power, however, seemingly passed away with the abolition of the slave trade; for Abo, a few years ago a large town, whose chief (Obi) had immense power on the Niger, has now become a place of quite secondary importance, and affords little trade.

We spent a short time at Abo, but deferred all interviews with the chiefs until the return journey. The Church Missionary Society's launch, *Henry Venn*, was lying at anchor, waiting to take the Bishop's letters up to him at Lokoja. Below Abo missionary enterprise has made no way

[1] The Niger Company's stations in the Ibo country of the main river are in succession:—Abo, Opai, and Utshi on the right bank, Munakor, Atani, Odekwi, Abutshi, and Onitsha on the left, and Asaba, Illah, and Illushi again on the right bank. For purposes of trade these stations are divided into two districts, called respectively Abo and Igara.

with the pagan tribes; what has been effected above this will be discussed later on.

The river now presents a nobler appearance, rolling down from the north in one vast expanse, a mile or more across, through flat banks covered with tall guinea-grass, amongst which may be seen peeping forth the low mud Ibo dwellings, surrounded by their little plantations of yams, bananas, and sugar-cane. Immense cotton trees (bombax), with their white buttress-like stems, rise up at intervals among the grass, and stretches of virgin forest, interlaced with luxuriant creepers and orchids, hang over the mighty stream. No sound disturbs the solitude of these dark groves, and no living thing appears to be moving within them, though occasionally the dull booming of the steamer's paddles startles a fish-eagle from his lofty perch over the water, or scatters a colony of black-and-white kingfishers.

Anchored at night in the middle of the stream, stillness reigns over everything, broken only by the patter on the deck of the watchman's naked feet or the slap of some native's hand on his body in the endeavour to destroy an exceptionally powerful mosquito which has managed to pierce his swarthy hide. Mosquitoes and sandflies there are in swarms, and sleep, without curtains, would be impossible. Other insects, too, are abundant, and the lighting of the lamps is the signal for an onslaught by every species of winged animal, from the ponderous rhinoceros beetle to the flying white ant, which adds to the annoyance of his presence by leaving his wings amongst your dinner before he finishes his short career in this world.[1]

"Sah! Sah! hippo lib sah!" By these mysterious words shouted at me by my little negro boy, Wangi, I was roused early on July 29th, and in a few seconds was clothed, armed,

[1] The natives of many parts of West Africa, like those of India, consider these insects, when fried, a great delicacy.

and in a boat, being gently paddled along by half-a-dozen Krooboys to a sandbank in the river, on the far side of which eleven hippos were disporting themselves in the water, splashing and snorting and making no end of a commotion. Arrived at a point nearest to the great beasts, we found that they were fully two hundred yards away, and all now intently watching our movements, with their nostrils pointed at us like so many double-barrelled gun muzzles, but with no other parts visible except their eyes and tiny ears. What tactics to adopt to get a shot was now the question. The Krooboys absolutely refused to paddle me up to them in the boat; "dey break 'em boat and we lib for die," said they, and even promises of unlimited "dash" would not persuade them. The *Boussa* was aground, and would be at least an hour getting off, and so I determined on lying down in the hopes of inquisitiveness inducing the hippos to come and have a better look at me; and at one time I thought the scheme would work, as all the heads went quietly under water, appearing again twenty yards nearer to me. This was repeated a second and a third time, and I began to feel that my first hippo was bagged. The fourth dive brought them within a hundred and fifty yards of me. The Krooboys were choking with excitement, and buried their faces in the sand to suppress a murmur. I fancy that they had already in their minds cut up the biggest beast and were broiling him; for myself, I was just debating whether I should take the entire skull back to England or only the teeth, when they disappeared for the fifth time, and rose, to our intense disgust, *farther off than ever.* They had evidently concluded their reconnaissance, and were executing "a strategic movement to the rear." To make matters worse the steamer's whistle now blew, which was the signal that she was under weigh and waiting for our return; so casting one last look at the still retreating hippos, we paddled back to be jeered

at by our shipmates for our trouble; but if Kroo curses affect in any way the future of the river-horse, better for these eleven had they all fallen to my rifle!

Atani, which we reached at 9 A.M., is an important oil market, being the centre of a large palm oil producing district.

This oil, which is the staple product of the West Coast of Africa, is obtained from a species of wild palm (*Elais guineensis*), and is utilised by the natives for various purposes. They use it for cooking as the natives of India use ghee; with it they grease their hair and smear their ebony skins, and they burn it in their lamps. The fruit of the tree grows in large prickly clusters, and its skin is of a bright red or orange colour, turning to yellow when ripe; its pulp is somewhat bitter in taste, and reddish-white in colour, and within the fruit is a stone or kernel, about the size of a filbert. The natives, gathering the fruit when ripe, bruise it gently in a wooden mortar and then boil it with water in large cauldrons; whilst simmering it is stirred with a stick to separate the pulp from the kernels, which sink to the bottom and are reserved for other uses. The oil, which floats on the surface of the water as the boiling proceeds, is skimmed off and placed in gourds or earthenware vessels. The demand for this product is enormous, the Niger alone sending some 8000 tons annually to Europe, where it is used in the manufacture of soap, candles, and such-like commodities, and as train oil.[1]

The trading is carried on chiefly by the women in this part of Africa, and all day long a stream of them may be

[1] There are two forms of palm oil in the Niger Territories, called respectively "hard" and "soft"; the former, which is of the consistency of butter, is sold only in England; the latter—a liquid oil—fetches a high price in all European markets. The difference lies only in the manufacture. Above Abutshi and in the Anambara Creek, all the oil is "soft"; in other parts, "hard." The buying price is £5 to £6 10s. per puncheon of 220 gallons.

seen coming in from the country to the factory, each with a pot of palm oil on her head, and generally with a baby tied on to her back; many also, whose homes are near the water, paddle down in their small dug-out canoes. The oil is carefully measured out by the agents, and its value returned in salt or cotton stuff. Unlike the Oil River traders, the Niger Company does not do business on the trust system, and payment is only made for what is actually received. The people cannot be said to be prepossessing in appearance, the faces of both men and women being much disfigured by tattooing and deep incisions; their hair, like that of the Oru people, is dressed in fanciful and various patterns, and the men cultivate a tuft of hair on the point of the chin.

A short distance above Atani, and on the same side of the river, the trading station of Abutshi stands, picturesquely situated on an overhanging cliff, where festoons of dark-green creepers, drooping over the brick-red soil, form a pleasant foreground to the picture. Iron store-sheds line the river bank, and in the distance, through an avenue of palms, appears the white men's dwelling-house, from the upper balcony of which we look down in wonderment on the scene before us. At our feet lies a beautifully-kept garden, studded with flower-beds of roses, hibiscus, and African mignonette, and shaded by shrubs and fruit trees of many varieties, amongst which brilliant-plumaged birds dart from bough to bough. A few yards beyond, the river sweeps past, dotted with little canoes, and extending southwards as far as the eye can see, like an immense lake, whilst across, on the opposite bank, distant a mile or more, a dark belt of heavy forest fringes the water. For a moment we forget that we are in Africa, and that we are gazing on the malaria-cursed Niger; but the pale faces of the four English residents of the place recall us to the realities of the situa-

tion.[1] Close to the factory, and on the river bank, an experimental garden of a few acres has been started, with the object of discovering what the soil is capable of producing, and some labour has been expended on clearing and planting. Near the river the soil is hard and red, and at two feet below the surface is almost as solid as rock; a hundred yards or so further back a change takes place, when the top soil, to a depth of four feet, becomes dark-coloured and loamy, with a good mixture of sand. Here, a quantity of plants of cocoa (*Theobroma cacao*) and coffee (*Coffea liberica*) are making good progress, the former being shaded by cuttings of a species of *ficus*, which abounds in the district. Attempts have been made to cultivate vanilla (*Vanilla planifolia*), but up to the present time with little success, though various kinds of fruit trees grow healthily and bear good flavoured fruit, the mango, lime, guava, and avocado pear (*Persea gratissima*) being particularly noticeable. Pine-apples also appear to thrive, as well as a number of English vegetables, samples of which we carried off in triumph, to vary our tinned "green stuff" on board the steamer. The climate of this part of the river is a slight improvement on that of the Delta, and cattle and horses, though not numerous, are to be found in the country; the latter, however, are miserable, weedy specimens, not more than thirteen hands in height, and suffer severely from the damp heat, being affected in the loins, as is the case in many similar climates in other parts of the world.

The native town of Abutshi is situated a few miles inland, and is inhabited by a wild and lawless people, who hold themselves aloof from other Ibo tribes, with whom they have constant feuds, resulting in much bloodshed, and punishment for their offences has frequently to be meted

[1] Abutshi is one of the largest stations of the Royal Niger Company, and the commercial headquarters of the Igara district.

out to them by the Niger Company. An hour's steam from Abutshi landed us, late in the afternoon, at Onitsha, a large and flourishing place, where, however, trade has had to be suspended for the misdeeds of the people, who, not content with having been bombarded and burnt out a few years before by a British war-ship,[1] recently made a murderous attack on the launch of a Niger Company's official. An Onitsha woman was supposed to have been insulted by a Krooboy on the launch; the alarm was given, a rush was made, and weapons were freely used, the English agent receiving a severe cut over the head with a matchet in his endeavour to pacify the frenzied natives. For a year or two the place has been closed to trade, and is suffering considerably in consequence, for the people are keen traders, and, as matters stand, have to take their goods to other markets, wasting much time in paddling down stream, the result of which has been that they have, in a great measure, abandoned trade, and returned to their original occupation as tillers of the soil.

The factory of the Niger Company stands close to the water's edge, surrounded by fine baobab trees; while a few hundred yards higher up the river is the French mission station, where four devout priests of the Society of the Holy Ghost are striving to Christianise the pagans, and appear to be doing considerable good. In the afternoon we visited these gentlemen, and enjoyed a pleasant and interesting conversation with Father Lutz, their worthy head. He told us much about the people and their vile customs, and his vain attemps to get them abolished.

The mission-house of the Church Missionary Society is situated two or three miles from the river, and close to the native town of Onitsha. Two weedy-looking ponies were provided for us, and on them we cantered off along the

[1] H.M.S. *Pioneer*, in 1879.

sandy pathway, delighted at the feeling of having a few hours' exercise after weeks of board-ship existence. A pleasant ride through a rich level country, cultivated with casava, yam, and corn, meeting occasionally bright little Ibo children, evidently returning from the mission school, who greeted us with a cheery "good morning;" and just as the setting sun was throwing its blood-red glare over everything, we entered the compound of the mission-house, a comfortable-looking mud dwelling, shaded by a grove of magnificent trees.

The Rev. Mr. Strong, a native of Sierra Leone, received us with a cordial welcome, and had many strange tales to relate to us of the barbarism of the people of Onitsha—tales of human sacrifices, destruction of twins, and slavery, which we listened to in horror and disgust; and, before taking our leave, the Commissioner had arranged that on the morrow the reverend gentleman should conduct us to the king, so that we might hear his views about the revolting practices of his people.

In mid-stream, and a short distance from our moorings, stretched the Igara sandbank, a noted slave-market,[1] where an average of 60 slaves per mensem are disposed of to the pagan inhabitants of the mainland. These slaves are brought down in canoes from the north, having travelled great distances. Children fetch about £6, and girls £5, men and women being somewhat cheaper. When the river is in full flood the bank disappears, the crowd of little mat huts being washed away, and the inhabitants moving over to the mainland.

On July 30th, having despatched an early breakfast, we made a start for Onitsha Town, preceded by numerous Kroomen, bearing presents of cotton stuffs to be distributed among the chiefs of the town; for in all these African coun-

[1] Since suppressed by the Royal Niger Company.

tries a person without presents is unable to gain access to any one of importance. Picking up our missionary friend *en route* to act as guide and interpreter, after a short walk we entered the outskirts of the town, at least we were told that we were within the town, but there was nothing to show that any habitations were at hand; everything was hidden in dense bush and groves of huge cotton trees. Onitsha covers a large area, and is divided into ten districts or villages, each presided over by a chief owing allegiance to the king—Akazua.

These villages are surrounded by a thick hedge, the only entrance being a rough gateway of upright poles. Within the gateway stands a juju or fetish house, and scattered amongst the undergrowth and trees are the dwellings of the people, invisible one from the other. Grassy lanes, shaded by avenues of giant bombax trees, stretch from one end of the town to the other; festoons of handsome creepers hang above our heads; and, as we wander down the leafy glades, there is little to tell us that we are in the midst of a populous Ibo town, and that the wildest of barbarians surround us on all sides, and, save that occasionally the quiet is disturbed by the shrill voice of some African woman, we might almost imagine ourselves in a deserted village—a tropical Auburn.

Passing through two or three of the outlying villages, we entered the king's village, and soon found ourselves in a large open space in front of the royal abode, where, under the shade of some trees, the youthful members of the royal family were at play. In all seriousness our interpreter introduced us to the "Prince of Wales," a fine young lad of about seventeen, clothed with a simple piece of rag, hardly of sufficient size to make a lady's ball-room handkerchief; but the other princes had evidently forgotten to dress themselves.

The preliminaries of a visit to royalty cannot be hurried. The king has much to go through before he can enter the presence of white men. Sacrifices have to be offered up to his gods, to protect him against the evil influences of the white man's fetishes; his state robes have to be donned, and, moreover, he thinks it necessary to show no unseemly haste in appearing. Some time, therefore, elapsed before we were admitted within the king's walls. A high mud wall encloses the "palace," outside which the king is only permitted to show himself once a year, when for a short period he dances before his admiring subjects.

At last his sable majesty saw fit to receive us, and we passed through a low doorway in the wall and entered the first courtyard, where big palavers are held. Delayed here again for a little time, we were conducted into the private courtyard, an enclosure some fifty feet by twenty, surrounded by low thatched verandahs. Empty gin-cases were given to us to sit on, and natives crowded in to gaze on us and to wonder what we wanted; when, after a short while, a side door opened, and the king appeared and took his seat on the throne—a mud platform covered with a red rug. He greeted us with the usual *'ndoh* and shook hands, drawing our hands through his own in a somewhat slimy fashion, finishing up by snapping his fingers and shaking his fist at us, which, though to English minds expressive of defiance, in reality was the heartiest of Ibo welcomes.

A stout light-coloured man of about forty-five years of age, clothed in a single cloth wound round the body and thrown toga-wise over one arm, with a smooth round face, in every feature of which weakness is plainly visible, a cap on his head, with sides of pink silk and top of black velvet, evidently intended to resemble a crown, and probably sold to him for a fabulous sum by some honest English trader. Such is Onitsha's king. On the ground at his feet lay an

earthenware pot containing a cow's skull, and on a wooden framework in front of the royal seat hung a bell, a horse's tail, a bundle of short iron spears, and a few other jujus.

A crowd of dirty ragged humanity of both sexes had now collected in the yard, and all commenced to bow down before their king and throw dust on their heads. This performance concluded, the palaver commenced, being conducted by means of our missionary interpreter and the king's speaker—it being considered *infra dig.* for royalty to converse direct with any stranger. "Wherefore comes the messenger of the Great White Queen to the court of so distant a potentate? Perchance she has heard in her country of the great power and magnificence of Onitsha's king and has sent friendly messages to her brother," thus spake the king. "The Great Queen," replied the Commissioner, "is displeased at the barbarous conduct of the people of your land, and has determined that it shall cease forthwith—slaves must no longer be offered up as sacrifices, twins must remain unmolested, and the buying and selling of slaves must be abolished." A murmur ran through the crowd as these words were uttered in the Ibo language, and the king sat as if dazed. The murmuring rose to shouting, and general confusion followed and continued for some time. At last the Commissioner asked the king if he was so devoid of power that he could not silence his noisy subjects, whereupon the courtyard was ordered to be cleared and the doors locked, and peace reigned again.

The king, evidently much alarmed, seized our hands, snapping his fingers with intense excitement, and swore that he desired peace with the white man, but that the abolition of these ancient customs would be his death-knell, and he implored that they might not be interfered with until *he* at least was dead: if slaves were not slaughtered at his death, the prestige of the kings of Onitsha would be gone.

"Do you then acknowledge" asked the Commissioner, "that you yourself are such an inhuman person as to wish for the death of other human beings at your burial?" "It is the custom of our country," shortly replied the king. "It must end—my queen speaks but once, her word is law, and you have already seen your town burned over your head for disobedience of her orders—so take warning." With these words the Commissioner passed to the matter of the king's treaties, and inquired if he fully understood what he had signed to some years before. To make more certain, the treaties (or "book," as termed by the natives) were produced and read over to him, and we were satisfied that he knew well their contents.

The palaver lasted for some hours, as the miserable monarch poured out to us all his affairs of state, from which we gathered that he was only in name a ruler, that several of his subordinate chiefs were not on speaking terms with him, and that his smallest actions were dependent on the will of his people. His character is one of the weakest that I have ever come across, and doubtless trade-gin is at the bottom of it all. Addicted to drink from his earliest years, he has become bloated and debilitated in mind and in body; forced to keep aloof from the outside world, his mind is simply bounded by his own mud walls, and it would have been wonderful if he had been anything different from what he is.

Bidding the wretched man a friendly farewell, and receiving from him many promises which we knew he would never keep, we gave him his presents and left the royal enclosure. As we returned through the town, sounds of music and singing greeted our ears, and after some difficulty we discovered whence it arose, and entered the courtyard of a small house, where we found a wedding ceremony in full swing, and a number of almost naked savages dancing in a circle and keeping time to the strains of a variety of

stringed and other instruments, which gave forth to our uneducated ears the most discordant sounds. Our presence being evidently not too agreeable to the performers, we relieved them of it as speedily as our curiosity would permit, and continued our way through the town, causing terror to the crowd that followed us by continually taking snap shots at them with a little hand-camera.

Arrived at the mission station, we were conducted to the mud structure, which does duty as a school on week days and as a *cathedral* on Sundays, where fifty little Ibo children sang Christian hymns in their own language for our edification.

One solitary Englishman lies buried in God's acre here, and over his remains stands a massive slab, erected to his nephew's memory by Sir T. Fowell Buxton, "the friend of Africa." Both the Roman Catholic and Protestant mission stations have been established at Onitsha for some years now, and have made considerable headway with the natives, chiefly by inducing the parents to send their children to the schools, the crafty Ibos imagining that by this means their sons may eventually obtain employment under the white traders, and so bring them in comparative wealth for their old age. Few converts to Christianity are made among the adults, but the fruits of missionary labour will doubtless be reaped in the coming generation.

Employed on our steamer is an Onitsha lad, to whom some facetious Englishman has given the name of Romeo. I asked him one day if he was a Christian, to which he promptly replied, "Yes, Sah! I be Christian man, but I no yet took de scrummen," which I discovered to mean that he had not received the Sacrament.

By noon the *Boussa* was under way again, and an hour later dropped anchor at Asaba[1] (on the right bank of the

[1] Native name, *Araba*.

river), the administrative headquarters of the Royal Niger Company.

A strong guard of the Niger Constabulary was drawn up on the bank to receive the Commissioner, and a salute of eleven guns, from a mountain battery, proclaimed to the district the arrival of some unusually important personage, as we made our way from the steamer to the constabulary mess-house.

The European portion of Asaba lies between the native town and the river, and is divided into two parts, civil and military; the former consists of the judge's house and court of justice, and the doctor's house, surrounded by a few acres of garden land, partly of flowers and partly of fruits and vegetables. Here, as at Abutshi, an experimental garden has been started, but with less success; the soil is poor and almost entirely of sand, changing occasionally to a hard red earth, with which little can be done. By clearing the bush a better soil is obtained; but this lies merely on the top, and soon gets washed away by the heavy rains. Amongst the few things that we noticed as growing at all well were pine apples (*Ananassa sativa*), bowstring hemp (*Sanseviera guineensis*), mango, lime, and guava trees. Cotton (*Gossypium herbacum var.*) and jute (*Corchorus capsularis*) were growing, but appeared much stunted. Cucumbers, lettuce, turnips, dwarf beans, and herbs were looking healthy, and the sight of them was pleasing to our English eyes and almost made our mouths water. The large trees which border the plantation consist chiefly of bombax, while a large variety of *leguminosea* and *euphorbias*, interlaced with rope-like climbers, grow luxuriantly everywhere. A few palm trees are scattered about, the fronds of which are heavily laden with the countless nests of the bright little yellow weaver-birds.

A road separates the civil station from the military, and

A ROYAL NIGER COMPANY'S POLITICAL AGENT AND HIS FAMILY.

the latter is surrounded by a high iron railing. The barracks of the constabulary are built on high ground, a hundred feet or so above the river, and are excellently arranged; the parade ground is bordered by the officers' quarters and mess-house, while the men's barracks face the river. Between the barracks and the native town stands the Roman Catholic mission-house, where we had the pleasure of meeting two Sisters (one Irish, the other French), who are the sole surviving white ladies in the Niger Territories. The pluck of these ladies in remaining in this desolate land is beyond all praise, but doubtless the good results of their work among the native children is a great incentive to them.

Asaba, till quite recently, was steeped in crime of the worst description; but since the vigorous action taken by the Royal Niger Company, in April 1888, for the suppression of human sacrifices, the people appear to have given up many of their ancient and barbarous customs and to be living a more quiet and civilised life.

The town of Asaba, like all Ibo towns, is divided into numerous districts or villages, and ruled over by some five hundred chiefs who acknowledge no superior. They consider themselves equal in power, and elect from their number fifty chiefs, who arrange the affairs of the town. In order to be eligible to wear the red cap or distinguishing mark of a chief, it was necessary, prior to 1888, that the aspirant should kill at least two human beings as a sacrifice; and at the funeral of a chief not less than three slaves had to be offered up before the corpse could be interred. These wretched slaves were kept in little villages apart from the other natives, and were employed on their masters' farms until the time came when they were led forth to be sacrificed.

In a certain part of the town was the juju grove, where

human sacrifices took place, and where the skulls of the victims were left to bleach; and close outside the cantonment stood a large sacred tree, whose spreading branches had witnessed the death of many a slave, slain to accompany his master on his last journey. Both these bloody spots exist no more, but the manner of their disappearance shall be told.

Early in 1888, the late Sir James Marshall, then Chief Justice of the Niger Territories, appeared on the scenes; and, hearing that a chief had died in the town, determined to take the opportunity of commencing a crusade against the inhuman slaughter of slaves. A palaver was held in the court-house, and all the chiefs were invited to attend. They came in great numbers, blowing their ivory horns and beating their drums, their faces being more than ever disfigured by streaks of white paint. The Chief Justice pointed out to them the heinousness of their customs, and forbade them to offer slaves at the funeral of the chief who was awaiting burial; his words, however, fell on deaf ears and were received with derisive laughter. Thus ended the palaver.

Trained spies were now employed to gain information as to what was going forward in the town, and it was learned that at noon the funeral services commenced, and three slaves were placed beside the corpse, only waiting till the fall of night to meet their doom. It was decided that the slaves should be rescued from their fate, and for this purpose an advance was made on the town by seventy of the constabulary, armed with Martini rifles and a Gatling gun. Their progress was unchecked, though the natives swarmed round them, armed with flintlocks and spears. After marching for a mile and a half the place of sacrifice was reached, but the corpse and the slaves had been removed. A palaver was then held, and the chiefs promising that no sacrifices should take place, the troops withdrew. At 9

o'clock that night the three slaves were sacrificed, and the fact was made known by the firing of a big gun, which was also the signal for the natives to issue from the town and besiege the cantonment. The siege lasted for the next two or three days, the Asabas becoming very defiant. At last a grand attack by the constabulary was planned, and a heavy cannonade commenced, followed by a general assault on the town. The natives offered little resistance, and every temple, juju-house, and idol was destroyed, and the chiefs, thoroughly cowed, gave up their arms and sued for peace on any terms, solemnly swearing to abandon human sacrifices for ever. This severe lesson was felt throughout the country far and wide, and the slaves of Asaba sent a deputation to thank the white men for the good deed they had done.

At break of day on July 31st, the scene from the *Boussa*, as she lay along the bank, was a lively one. Groups of Asaba women everywhere met the eye, bathing and washing their clothes, the former operation being a lengthy one and accompanied with much native soap. Fishermen were perched on their lofty platforms, waiting for an opportunity to net the wary fish; Krooboys were bringing huge bundles of firewood on to the steamer; and, strangest sight of all, the Commissioner was having his hair cut by the officer commanding the artillery, before an admiring group of paint-besmeared chiefs.

At 8 A.M. the Royal Niger Constabulary paraded for inspection, and went through a number of manœuvres, customary on such occasions, with great éclat. The force is officered by Englishmen, and consists of about five hundred men—Fantis, Hausas, and Yorubas—mostly recruited from the Gold Coast. They are well paid and fed, and are clothed in a Khaki zouave dress. Their arms consist of Snider rifles and sword bayonets; and in addition to the infantry there is a very smart little battery of mountain guns, com-

manded by an ex-gunner of our navy. This miniature army has been called upon frequently to undergo some very rough bush-fighting, and has been found all that could be desired. The bachelors of the constabulary are quartered in comfortable corrugated iron barracks, and the married men live with their families close by, in what is termed "Soldier Town"—a quarter very similar to the "lines" of an Indian native regiment.

At mid-day we were under steam again, and at nightfall anchored off Illah,[1] a small trading station on the right bank, situated on the edge of a deadly looking swamp, over which hung a dense vapour, betokening malaria of the worst type. Three miles from the river lies the town of Illah, peopled by some 3000 Ibos, who live in continual dread of the slave-raiding Mahommedans of the north.

On the left bank we have now entered the country of the Igaras, a people once flourishing and powerful but whose glory is fast departing, owing doubtless to Mahommedan oppression.

Steaming hard all day against the current, through ever-varying scenery, on August 1st, at 4 P.M., we reached the important town of Ida,[2] the capital of the Igara country. The town is a large one, and picturesquely built on red cliffs, some 200 feet high, overhanging the river; the huts are, for the most part, circular in shape and constructed of grass. Huge trees and dense green undergrowth shade the little plots of cultivation round the huts, and everything looks peaceful enough, but war is in the background, for the fighting men of the country, with their king, or Atta,

[1] The trade of Illah, like that of Illushi, another small station on the right bank, consists chiefly of rubber and gum-copal. The latter is a valuable product, and used in Europe for the manufacture of copal varnish. We were shown some fine specimens of this substance as clear as amber, and containing the corpses of numerous flies and other insects.

[2] No great amount of trade is carried on at Ida; the chief products are palm oil, kernels, rubber, and pepper.

at their head, are encamped a few miles behind the town, waiting their opportunity to attack their neighbours. The people are pagans, though some Mahommedans are to be found dwelling in the town; and at sunset we saw several of the Faithful prostrating themselves in prayer, unmindful of their pagan surroundings.

The absence of the Atta from his town made an interview impossible, and thus we deferred making his acquaintance until our return journey, and early the following morning were on our way again up stream.

The country on the river banks, hitherto flat and uninteresting, now assumes an aspect almost romantic—little grass-hutted villages, resembling in the distance a collection of beehives, lie nestling among high waving corn; low round hills, covered with massive granite boulders and dark green vegetation, crop up on both sides of the river, and about noon we are passing the famous "Bird rock," and getting among the hills round Beaufort Island. Ever and anon our passage seems barred by some mountain of granite boulders, which look as if the giants of bygone days had been amusing themselves by throwing rocks as large as houses into heaps. After a while the river opens out again, and the town of Lokoja appears in the distance, lying at the base of a long range of table-topped mountains which stretch away westward as far as the eye can see. Passing the confluence where the mighty Benue River, flowing down from the north-east, mingles its waters with the Niger, we anchor, at 3 P.M., off Lokoja, on the right bank of the main river.

CHAPTER II.

THE TRIBES OF THE LOWER NIGER.

As has been already mentioned, the tribes of the Lower Niger may be divided into three large families, the Idzo, the Ibo, and the Igara.

The Idzo inhabit the southern or Delta portion of the river, and little intercourse is held between them and Europeans; they are considered a brave people, and live much on the water, being expert paddlers.

The Ibo is doubtless the most important of the Lower Niger peoples, and the country they inhabit covers an immense tract of land.[1] This family is subdivided into numerous tribes, which have many minor peculiarities, but the main characteristics are similar, and the Ibo language (of which a grammar was published by Mr. Schön in 1861), is understood by all. The men, though not usually taller than five feet six inches, are muscular, strong, and healthy, and the women, when young, resemble veritable pieces of ebony statuary; when, however, they reach the age of twenty or so, they become either obese or excessively thin. To be considered a beauty, an Ibo woman must be fat, and have a well-polished jet-black skin. They are extremely cleanly in their habits, and groups of women may be seen throughout the day bathing on the banks of the river. Both men and women carry loads on the head, from sixty to a hundred pounds in weight, and most of the trade is con-

[1] It is impossible to give any estimate of numbers, but I should place the Ibo population certainly at some *millions*.

ducted by the women, whilst the men employ their time in agriculture, fishing, and other pursuits.

For savages, the Ibo are an intelligent people, though of course no attention is paid to education, and they are almost entirely ignorant of the ordinary laws of nature, and have very little, if any, knowledge of the stars. They have no distinct expressions for numbers[1] above four hundred, and no weights and measures except bags and calabashes, and for lineal measurement they employ the length of an average man's arm as the unit. The Ibos do not excel as hunters, though amongst some of the tribes men are to be found who employ their time in hunting elephants and hippopotami, chiefly by means of pit-falls. In the path known to be frequented by these beasts, huge holes are dug and carefully covered over with brushwood, sharp stakes and spears are planted firmly at the bottom of these pits, and the animal, when impaled, is despatched with spears and flintlocks. The flesh of both these animals is highly prized for food, as is likewise that of the monkey and dog. The natives residing on the banks of the river kill hippopotami (*otobo*) with harpoons. These weapons are some ten feet in length, and made of very light wood; to one end is attached a heavy barbed head, secured to the wooden shaft or float by a length of fibre rope. The chase is exciting. A hippo is sighted, and numbers of canoes dart out from the river bank, the paddlers throw their harpoons and make off at once out of harm's way; time is then allowed the miserable victim to feel the effects of the barbs imbedded in his flesh, and, if opportunity offers, a long rope

[1] Their numbers are from one to ten—*ovu, ibua, ito, ino, ise, isi, isa, isato, itenani, iri;* from eleven to nineteen is expressed by ten and one, ten and two, and so on; for 20, 30, 40, and on to 100 they have distinct words. Although they have no distinct expressions for numbers higher than 400, yet their minds are capable of grasping the meaning of much larger numbers, and they express them by the simple method of multiplication and addition, thus 800 would be two four hundreds.

is attached to the harpoon ropes, by tugging at which from the shore intense pain is caused to the hippopotamus, until in time he becomes too feeble to resist, and falls an easy prey to the hunters' spears and guns.

The ivory obtained from the hippopotamus is used for making small war horns and other musical instruments, and the small tusks of elephants are hollowed out and made into similar instruments, and carried by the chiefs as emblems of office. Some of these war horns are neatly carved with simple devices. The Ibos are great fishermen, and have various ways of taking the fish, the principal being nets secured between stakes in the shallows, line fishing with primitive hooks of native manufacture, spearing by day and night, and, the commonest way of all, the *ikum*. This latter is a somewhat elaborate arrangement. A platform is erected on poles on the river bank, forty or fifty feet in height. On this structure sits the fisherman, holding in his hand one end of a long rope, the other end being attached to a circular framework covered with a bag-like net. The circular net works on a pivot or hinge close under the bank, and, when let go, lies at the bottom of the river, well baited with fish intestines and other dainties. The fisherman, from his position aloft, can see the fish over the net, and when he thinks the right moment has arrived, he pulls the rope gently till the framework is out of the water. The rope is then secured, and the man descends to take his capture from the net. All the people living near the water make use of dug-out canoes to a great extent, both men and women bring proficient paddlers. The Asabas, Onitshas, Okos, Atanis, Akris, Odekwes, and Osipitis sit down to paddle, the 'Nsubes, Umweris, 'Nteges, and Ibajis stand, whilst the Anams both sit and stand.

Many of the tribes devote their time wholly to agriculture, and cultivate cotton, yams (*iji*), cassava (*apunkoro*),

Indian corn, Guinea corn, castor oil, beans (*agua*), and plantains (*une*).[1] Their agricultural implements consist of hoes (*omumu*), native-made matchets (*'npama*), English-made matchets (*opia*), and a sharp-pointed digging implement called *'ngwani* or *ogu-ani*, which is of two kinds, either made entirely of wood or shod with iron. They make earthenware pottery to a great extent, neatly fashioned but unadorned in any way. Most of the household utensils are of clay, and many of their idols are of the same material. The wood-carving is of the roughest description, consisting of bowls and platters and elaborate fetishes, representing grotesque figures of men and women in the nude, and usually much out of proportion.

The tribal marks vary immensely among the Ibos, each small tribe having its distinctive mark, which is usually a number of curved and straight incisions on the face, alike in both sexes. At Abo the people have three short cuts on each temple, and at Asaba and many other places the fashion obtains of painting white rings round the eyes, which gives the men a most hideous appearance, and which is done as a fetish against evil spirits. Antimony is in general use for blackening the eyelids of both sexes, and is obtained chiefly from Hausa and other northern traders.

The mode of wearing the hair is various; some tribes shave the head, whilst others wear the hair long (often in plaits). Camwood and chalk is used to die the hair in time of affliction or at the worship of their jujus, and the Anams and 'Nsubes dye the hair on occasions of dancing and merriment.

The Ibo dress is simple. Females remain in nature's garb until the age of puberty, when they clothe themselves in strips of cotton stuff from the waist to the knee, tying a

[1] Tobacco is very little grown in the Ibo country, though imported tobacco and snuff are largely used by the natives, the latter being chewed and rolled about the gums.

bright-coloured handkerchief (or bandana) round the hair. On the body they wear strings of coral and black Segi beads, and round their ankles they adorn themselves with iron, brass, and ivory rings. These ivory anklets are often of the most ponderous description, but are chiefly worn by the rich and important women. The females of Anam wear massive anklets of brass, those of young girls being of stout spiral wire many pounds in weight, whilst older women wear huge cymbal-like brass plates, often a foot in diameter, which cause them to walk in a most awkward manner, and which when once put on are never removed.

Ibo women seldom wear ornaments in the ear, but round their necks hang necklaces of coral, pieces of ivory, and Tiggida beads, the latter being made of cocoa-nut shell or palm kernels. Such necklaces are often worn by men as well as women.

The dresses worn on occasions of festivities and dancing are numerous, such as the *binuku* and *ita* of the Asabas and the *mbeye* of other tribes. This latter is a short red petticoat, embellished with numerous small bells, and worn chiefly by males. The women as a rule, on these occasions clothe themselves in plain white cotton stuff, and the young men adorn their heads with the feathers of white egrets or other birds. The clothing usually worn by the men is a simple strip of cotton stuff, though, where intercourse is held with Europeans, breeches and other civilised clothes are being introduced.

In battle the Ibos wear no particular protection, except small charms sewn up in leather or cloth, which depend from body and arms. Their weapons consist of flintlocks, bows and arrows, matchets, and spears (*agana*), which they hurl as well as use for thrusting purposes. As a rule they do not poison their weapons.

The towns and villages of most Ibo tribes are straggling

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IBO TRADING WOMEN.

and irregular in shape, with very little plan about them, though at Asaba, Illah, Anam, 'Nsube, and some other places, regular streets and lanes are laid out. They are unacquainted with fortifications, even of the most primitive kind, but have been known to intrench their villages when an attack has been imminent. Trees and thick undergrowth are allowed to stand uncleared amongst the huts of the villages, and serve as a great protection from the sudden incursions of neighbouring tribes.

The huts are quadrangular in shape, and built of mud and matting and thatched with grass. In the centre of the building is an open courtyard, at one end of which the head of the house has his apartments, his wives and family living in rooms on the right and left of the courtyard. The wives of the more important chiefs reside in separate houses, and only visit their lord when summoned to the presence. Within the hut lie a few household utensils and weapons, but there is no furniture nor adornment. A seat is constructed of mud in most of the huts, and in the dwellings of the well-to-do a few old empty gin-cases are used for sitting on. At Onitsha and Asaba the seat of royalty is a raised platform of mud, covered with a rug or piece of cloth, and the regal couch of the same material, the king's head being supported by a hard and narrow pillow on which lies the neck.

Within the huts burning embers are continually kept, and never allowed to become extinguished. In the country they obtain fire by means of flint and steel and oriakoo—a kind of pith extracted from palm trees—or by firing their guns into a bunch of dry grass. Their food consists of fish, yam, corn, and plantains, and is prepared by boiling in separate pots for each article, a sauce of palm oil, salt, and pepper being concocted in another vessel. There are no particular observances at cooking or at meals, both sexes feeding as a

rule together; but at Onitsha and Abo the wives or some other special attendants prepare their food for the men, and wait on them while eating, not, however, being permitted to feed with their masters. At Asaba, where the kings or chiefs number fully four hundred, no one is allowed to prepare the royal dishes, the chiefs themselves acting as their own cooks and eating in the strictest privacy.[1] Their principal drink is palm wine (called by the Abos *mayan-'nkoo*), and another intoxicant termed *pitto* or *mayan-oyoro*. Such beverages as tea and coffee are unknown.

Their amusements are few, dancing and wrestling being the principal, and for games they have *warri* and *okwe*, played with cowries and pebbles.

Both sexes enter the married state at a very early age, like all inhabitants of hot climates, and it is no uncommon sight to see a girl of twelve years of age carrying a baby on her back. The marriage laws are of the strictest. A man wishing to take to himself a wife, proceeds to the father of his desired bride, to whom he pays goods to the value of about twenty-five shillings, wherewith to defray the expenses of a feast of kola nuts and palm wine, partaken of by the relatives of the bride. This transaction being completed, the lady is his lawful wife, and follows her lord to his house. The laws of divorce, on the other hand, are simple. Should the wife leave her husband for another after having borne children, the children become the property of the husband, but he has no further claim on his faithless spouse; should, however, the wife have been childless, her husband has a right to all her effects, and can likewise

[1] The origin of this is said to be that, many years ago, an Asaba chief was eating with his family, when a quarrel arose about the food, which nearly resulted in bloodshed, since which time the law has required the chiefs to eat alone. Other laws relating to the food of the Asaba chiefs are, that they are not permitted to eat in any house except their own, and should they visit a foreign country are only allowed to eat food which they have brought with them from their own land.

demand the refund of the original purchase money from her parents or new husband. At Asaba a somewhat curious custom prevails. Prior to marriage a girl is made *ugo*, or "eagle-feathered," by having a feather stuck in her hair. The law then permits no divorce, and commands the wife to remain with her husband till death, punishment being meted out to any man attempting to entice her away; should she, however, leave her native land, she is never permitted to return, and the husband cannot claim the refund of the purchase-money from the parents of an "eagle-feather" wife.

One of the most barbarous customs of the Ibo tribes is the destruction of twins. A woman, by giving birth to twins, is considered to have committed an unnatural offence, and to have made herself akin to the lower order of animals. Her twins are taken from her and thrown into the bush to perish, whilst the miserable woman herself is proclaimed an outcast and driven from her village. No greater insult can be offered to an Ibo woman than to call her "twin-bearer," or to hold up two fingers at her. This barbarism, at one time common in all Ibo tribes, has now considerably abated amongst the tribes dwelling near the main river, owing to the exertions of the Royal Niger Company.

Cannibalism is still rife amongst many of the tribes inland from the river, the Abutshis especially practising this disgusting habit to a great extent.

The Ibos worship idols made of wood, mud, and iron, fashioned in extraordinary forms, which they consider their protectors,[1] at home and abroad, from all the evils of life, and to them they make offerings of bullocks, goats, sheep,

[1] The principal gods are called *Ikenga*, *Offo*, *Isu-Chuku*, *Isi*; at Asaba, *Eki*, *Aroh*, *Onisseh*, *Anni-Asaba*; at Onitsha, *Orinse*, *Anni-Onitsha*, *Okikiba*, *Ojedi*, *Utoh*, *Azeh*; at Oko, *Anni-Mogoro*, *Adjeh*; at Odekwe, *Igi-Oji*; at Abo, *Fejo-koo* (a clay image used at the celebration of the yam festival, and which is supposed to be the great supplier of this article), *Ogbooka* (a roughly carved wooden image used during the yearly festival and looked on as the god of mirth).

fowls, palm oil, yams, kola nuts, and sometimes human beings at certain periods, such as on the day of eating new yam (equivalent to New Year's Day), in times of sickness or any great calamity, and when the river is in full flood. Their periodical festivals are the *Ofallah*, *Okwensu*, *Ositte*, *Opotto*, *Iffejoko*, General Cleansing of the Country, and a festival for appeasing the wrath of the water, to diminish accidental drowning. Every fifth day is considered the Ibo Sabbath, known by the principal tribes as *eke*, *nkwo*, or *afo*, on which day also offerings are made to their gods.

Like other pagans, these people are exceedingly superstitious, and employ numerous devices to ward off misfortune. White rings (as before stated) are painted round the eyes to protect them from evil spirits, and the head and body is sometimes smeared with camwood and chalk for a similar purpose. Small white cowries on thread, and iron rings, are worn round the wrists and ankles, as fetishes to avert ills and disasters, and are provided by the priests or medicine-men, as are also little calabashes of poisonous drugs, suspended from the neck and intended as a protection against untimely death. Kola nuts and cowries are used for casting lots, and recourse is had to poisoned water to prove the guilt or innocence of a person accused of murder, witchcraft, or other serious crimes. A preparation of sassa wood is mixed with water, and the accused person is forced to drink it before the assembled tribe; should the poison not take effect, the person is proclaimed innocent, but should death result, the person is considered guilty. At Onitsha and other large towns, the chief or king alone prepares and administers the sassa-water, and, as can readily be understood, employs this simple method to rid himself of any troublesome subjects he may have in his town.

Certain persons in each tribe follow the vocation of doctor (*dibia*), but they have little knowledge of medicines

(*ogu*) beyond the preparation of poison from herbs, and the dispensing of fetishes and charms to the sick. Great reverence is paid to European doctors by the natives, though they usually consider that their cures are effected by charms or some unknown power. Here, as in most uncivilised parts of the world, members of a medical mission might make great strides in the civilisation of the people.

The government of most of the Ibo tribes may be termed monarchical, though often it is so merely in name. At Onitsha, Oko, Illah, and Anam, kings and chiefs are mere puppets in the hands of the people.

The Ibo laws are few, but infringement of them is rigorously punished. Death is the award for murder, whilst theft may be punished by death or, as is more often done, by selling the guilty person into slavery. For adultery a heavy fine is levied on the man, though generally the outraged husband demands satisfaction at the point of the spear. Should a chief's wife be deemed guilty, both she and her paramour are required to drink sassa-water to satisfy the honour of the chief.

Slavery exists among all the tribes, the slaves being either domestic slaves, born in the family of their master, or slaves bought from northern slave-dealers, or prisoners captured in war. The wives and children of a slave belong absolutely to the slave's master. The servitude of the domestic slave is extremely light, and no master is able to kill or sell a domestic slave without the approval of his fellow-slaves; moreover the relations between master and slave in many instances are of such a kind that the former does nothing without consulting the latter, and it is not uncommon for a slave to acquire sufficient wealth to purchase his freedom. The laws relating to captured slaves are more severe, and they are frequently eaten, killed as sacrifices, or on the death of their master slaughtered to accompany him to another world.

On the death of a chief or his wife, a number of slaves and bullocks are procured to be offered up as a sacrifice, and when possible the corpse is buried the day after death; guns are fired, drums beaten, and feasting and merriment continues for nine days or more, portions of food being thrown into the open grave to the dead. Ordinary people are buried by their relatives with little ceremony, beyond feasting, accompanied by singing and dancing. The general belief among the Ibos is that after death they are born again into this world as children; some few believe in a world of spirits, in which they will see their *Chuku* or god, and others again imagine that death is the end of all things.

The country inhabited by the Igara (or Igala) people extends along the left bank of the Lower Niger from Ibokeim (a little above Onitsha) to Gbebe at the confluence.

The pure Igaras are only found some fifty miles inland from the river; beyond that distance they have intermarried and become considerably mixed up with the Igbons, Igbajis, and Ejules, and have lost many of their special characteristics, their language also having become a patois. From Ibokeim to Ida the Igaras possess some thirty towns and villages on or near the river bank, and from Ida to Gbebe another fifteen or twenty. From Adanakpa to Gbebe the people have intermingled with the Basas and Igbiras, and here the language has become so corrupted as to form an entirely independent language, which is known as Opoto. Igaras are to be found above Gbebe as far as Yimaha on the Benue River, but these are either settlers among the Igbiras or refugees from justice or from the oppression of their chiefs.

The Igaras, like the Ibos, are a short, sturdy people, and their intercourse with Mahommedans has made them more intelligent than the tribes lower down the river. Their

method of counting and weighing is almost identical with that of their neighbours, the Ibos, a calabash of fixed size, called *osu*, being used in measuring grain and oil. Though chiefly employing their time in agriculture[1] and fishing, near the river, a few of the tribes of the interior keep flocks of goats, and some of the poorer men of a family gain a livelihood by hunting wild beasts, which they kill with poisoned arrows. Elephants used to be found behind Idah as far as Gurugu, but are now exceedingly scarce, and very little ivory, is obtained in this part, except hippopotamus[2] ivory, which is bartered to the Upus, who use it principally for making armlets.

Though the Igaras are generally at war with some neighbouring tribe, they are in reality a peace-loving people, and much prefer trading and agriculture to fighting.

Their huts are chiefly made of mud and sunburnt bricks, circular in shape, and thatched with grass, though, as the northern portion of their country is reached, mud walls give place to matting. There is no furniture in their huts, and only the better classes are permitted to use rugs and blankets to lie on. In a chief's family the men and women live in separate huts, but among the lower classes both sexes live together. They take their meals separately, the men eating before the women, *place aux hommes* being an African rule without exception, but the ladies have the privilege of cooking for their lords.

Their food consists of meat, fish, yam, Indian and Guinea corn, cassava, and beans, and they drink intoxicating beverages made from the palm and Indian and Guinea corns.

[1] The Igaras cultivate cotton, tobacco, and beni seed; they also manufacture coarse grass mats and bags, cloths, clay and brass pipes, hoes, and leather. The latter is dyed black, red, or yellow, and is made into *anos* or charms for the neck and waist, as well as being used for covering baskets and the handles of swords and knives.

[2] Igbira and Igara native name, *okaku*.

The chief articles of foreign trade are palm oil, kernels, and rubber, whilst among themselves they barter potash, native cloth, salt, tobacco, and calabashes.

True Igaras have no tribal marks, and use neither tattooing nor paint on body or face; both sexes file the upper front teeth straight across, and use antimony on their eyes. The dress of the women consists of one or two cloths wound round the body, usually fastened under the arms and hanging loose below the knees; round her plaited wool the Igara beauty ties a gaudy handkerchief, and glass or clay ornaments hang from her ears, whilst necklets of elephants' eyelashes adorn her swarthy throat, and bangles and anklets[1] of brass, iron, or copper her arms and legs. The dress is the same before and after marriage. The men wear a small cotton loin cloth and a strip of cotton stuff over the body, though among the well-to-do pagans Mahommedan tobes and pyjamas are coming into fashion, the head being covered with a skull cap. Chiefs shave the head, leaving a small tuft of wool on the top, while ordinary individuals allow the hair to grow untouched.

In dancing, the men and women make no change in their dress. Certain persons, supposed to be spirits (*eku* or *eyugu*), perform at dances and festivities, clothed from head to foot in scarlet, and having their faces made hideous with paint and other materials.

The Igaras are pagans, idolaters, and superstitious to a degree. Their principal idols are Okenga, a wooden carving of a man, Ebo and Ode,[2] small calabashes wound round with thread and stuck over with parrot feathers.

[1] The wives of the chiefs wear heavy ivory anklets, and sometimes sandals and silk cloths, and in moving about are preceded by men bearing a staff and cowskin fan of honour.

[2] These gods are said not to be the original gods of the Igaras, but to have been introduced from surrounding tribes, who are regarded as great fetishmen.

These are gods of protection from evil spirits and witches, of whom the miserable people have a tremendous dread. They worship the spirits of their relatives, and offer sacrifices of goats and fowls at their graves, believing that all good or evil which befalls them comes from these. They wear fetishes made of twisted iron rings, from which hang leather charms obtained from Mahommedans. Fortune-telling (*egbigba*) is much believed in, and certain persons gain a livelihood by preying on the minds of the simple Igaras, the stock-in-trade of the seer being merely a number of pieces of broken calabashes strung together.

Marriages take place at an early age among these people, and the bride has more or less to be purchased by the bridegroom, who pays to the parents ten "heads"[1] of cowries, and presents to the young lady on engagement four *ties* of cloth, two armlets, a necklace, and a pair of earbeads. Engagements are often made when the girl is a mere child, and on the appointed wedding day no further ceremony takes place beyond the bride being conducted at sunset to her husband's hut by two or more of her relatives, when the husband presents her with a mat, a cock, a young ram, a young female goat, pots of native beer, kola nuts, and firewood, the marriage feast being given ten days later.

As great reverence is paid to the dead, so the funeral ceremonies are somewhat elaborate. Shortly after death the body is carefully washed, rubbed with camwood, and swathed in white cloths from head to foot. The grave is dug with much care, and mats spread on the soil at the bottom. Cloths and slippers are then placed over the mats, being sent for that purpose by the relatives and friends of the deceased; but prior to being laid in the grave these articles are torn or cut, the people imagining that if this be not done, when the deceased is born again into the world he

[1] Ten heads is about equivalent to twelve shillings.

or she will be dumb. The corpse is then borne with great shouting and noise to the graveside on a litter strewn with cowries, which are intended for the use of the deceased in the other world, though, oddly enough, the attendants do not seem averse to pocketing any cowries which fall from the bier. The body is laid on the ground, and female mourners surround it, weeping and singing, and fanning it until the time comes to place it in its last resting-place. The cloths which bind the corpse are loosened after it is consigned to the grave, and pieces of wood and mats laid carefully over, and then earth piled on the top. Guns are fired in honour of the deceased, and the funeral ends. The third and seventh days after the funeral are spent in feasting, and on the latter day the female mourners assemble and beat the earth over the grave until it is hard, when a shed is erected over the whole. During three moons the mourners visit the tomb and make sacrifices and offerings to the deceased. How long a dead person is supposed to wander in the other world before being re-born, and what sort of a world it is, I was unable to learn, a diversity of opinions appearing to exist on the subject.

The government of the country is monarchical, and hereditary through the female line, the acknowledged head of the Igara people being the Atta of Ida, who has absolute power over life and property. The people, however, have a somewhat strong desire for independence, which they show by constantly leaving the capital and founding small towns in the interior at a distance from the authority of the Atta. Their laws are simple. Murder and theft are punishable by death, adultery by heavy fine, confiscation of property, or slavery, whilst drinking of sassa-wood water is imposed on persons accused of lying and slandering. It is not uncommon, however, to allow substitutes to partake of this poisoned water, and persons are procurable who are

acquainted with an antidote, and therefore take the potion with impunity. Dogs are even allowed to be used as substitutes, but, should they die, the owner has to pay a heavy fine, being deemed guilty.

The Igaras are not cannibals, neither do they destroy twins. On the contrary, these are considered lucky. Slavery of course exists, but principally of the domestic kind, and the slaves are generally treated with kindness, being useful as traders, as well as for fighting when necessary.

Like most African tribes, their amusements consist principally of dances and night revels; apparently their only game being *ogori*, which, in one form or another, appears in many parts of Africa and even Arabia. It consists of a board or box with several compartments, in which are a number of stones or cowries, and is usually played by two persons. Once a year, at the festival of Otcho, the Igaras from far and wide assemble at a certain spot, erect small huts of leaves and branches, and spend one day in feasting and merriment, the Atta being present. The royal trumpet is sounded in the presence of all, so that the people may know that their king still lives; and towards sunset the monarch, mounted on horseback, is conveyed home by his subjects amidst great shouting and singing, the temporary huts being set on fire.

The origin of this festival (with which there are no religious rites connected) is not known, but it is supposed to be commemorative of the time when the Igaras were hunters, and dwelt in rough shelters in the bush. It takes place about January or February, when the river is at its lowest, and immediately afterwards the people disperse to their homes, and commence preparing the land for sowing.

It may be of interest to mention that the Igaras are supposed—though they themselves will hardly admit it—to

have been originally slave-hunters from the Yoruba country, who wandered eastward is search of slaves and game, and gradually established themselves in their present land. The great similarity in many words in the two languages makes this supposition more than probable.[1]

[1]

English.	*Yoruba.*	*Igara.*	*English.*	*Yoruba.*	*Igara.*
Foot	Ese	Erhe	Wind	Efufu	Afu
Hand	Owo	Owo	Stone	Okuta	Okuta
Ears	Eti	Eti	Sun	Orun	Oru
Eyes	Oju	Eju	Moon	Osu	Osu
Nose	Imu	Omu	Stars	Irawo	Uwo
Water	Omi	Omi	Child	Omo	Oma
Fire	Ina	Una	Husband	Oko	Oko

CHAPTER III.

LOKOJA AND THE FULAS.

LOKOJA is situated on the river bank at the foot of Mount Patte,[1] and is essentially a modern town, having gradually increased in size since the ill-starred expedition of 1841 tried to establish a model farm adjacent to the site of the present town.

This was our first glimpse of a Mahommedan-peopled place in the river, and, though dirty to a degree, it compares favourably with the towns of the Lower Niger. On the outskirts of the town stand the factory of the Royal Niger Company, and the mission-houses, where we had the pleasure of meeting and listening to the talk of worthy old Bishop Crowther and Archdeacon Johnson, the latter amusing us by relating an incident of his mother's life. In her youth she was one day working in the fields adjoining her village, when a raid for slaves was made by the Mahommedans. She was seized, and being led away from the field by one of the raiders, when a sudden thought struck her and she fired a capacious mouthful of tobacco (which she was chewing) full into the eyes of her startled captor, whose temporary blindness enabled her to dash into the standing crops and evade pursuit. This happy thought of hers made considerable difference to her life, and moreover gave the Church Missionary Society the valuable services of a devout native missionary.

[1] Patte means *mountain* in the language of the hill tribes.

Lokoja is peopled by no particular tribe, Hausas, Nupes, Fulas, and many others being here represented. Situated as it is at the junction of two mighty waterways, it is a convenient place for traders from north, south, east, and west to meet and exchange their goods; the population is therefore ever-changing, and permanent residents are not very numerous, being chiefly the employees of the Royal Niger Company. The town does not cover a great extent of ground, the round grass huts being packed close together, and the lanes between them, which are few, being very narrow. Strips of grass matting, six feet or so in height, enclose the small compounds of each family, in which stand two or three huts and a few trees, the Mahommedan here as elsewhere paying great attention to the privacy of his family.

Being anxious to get a shot at some of the antelope[1] which are said to abound in the country, I made an early start on August 3rd, accompanied by an old Hausa, who had the reputation of being a keen *shikari*. Frederick Fowell Buxton Abigeh (godson of the "friend of Africa") was originally a Hausa slave, and as a boy became the servant of Drs. Barth and Overweg, whom he accompanied in their wanderings in the Central Sudan. A few years later he was taken to England, and, together with another young Hausa, was received into the family of the learned Dr. Schön, who made use of the services of the lads in his study of the Hausa language. These youths remained in England some years, embracing Christianity, and, as their worthy master says in the preface to one of his works, thinking that the time had come for them to return to their native land and spread the Gospel of Christ, they were despatched to Africa as lay missionaries. Arrived at Lokoja, the young converts separated, Abigeh remaining in the Nupe country and the other going further north. A few

[1] Chiefly *Oryx leucoryx*, *Damalis senegalensis*, and *Gazella sömmeringii*.

months later both returned to their original faith—Mahommedanism—finding Christianity full of drawbacks. Abigeh himself told me that the reason for his change of creed was that he wished to marry four wives, and the only way to manage it was by turning Mahommedan; however, Christian or Mahommedan, he was a good sportsman, a knowing trader, and his knowledge of English made him an entertaining companion.

We determined to make for the top of Mount Patte, where my trusted guide told me we should find the antelope at this season of the year, the grass being too long and the ground too swampy in the low country. Taking a narrow path through fields of high corn, we passed the comfortable-looking house of the Church Missionary Society (solidly built of stone), and soon reached the bush, when the path began gradually to ascend the slopes of the hill, shaded by trees of many varieties. A climb of 1200 feet landed us on the summit, an almost level plain some miles in extent and dotted here and there with patches of wood; sport, however, was out of the question, for as soon as we reached the top, a storm broke over us and rain descended in torrents for hours, so we had to content ourselves by taking shelter under a tree, hoping against hope that the clouds would lift. Huge and hideous dog-faced monkeys barked round us and came as near as their courage would allow them, evidently anxious to learn what enemy was invading their stronghold; and once a small doe came running straight towards us, eager as ourselves to escape the down-pour, and ignorant that intruders were under the shelter of the spreading bread-fruit tree.

Some hours we spent listening to the experiences of the garrulous old Hausa; and then, abandoning the chase, we made a circuit of the plateau to get a view of the surrounding country. Below us lay Lokoja, nestling under the

shelter of the hill; to the north and west long ranges of table-topped mountains stretched along the banks of the Kworra or Middle Niger, while from the east flowed down the Benue River, forming with the Niger one vast sheet of water three miles or more across.[1] The rain ceased as we stood gazing at the scene below us, and the sun bursting through the dark storm-clouds completed a picture which would have delighted the heart of an artist; but wet through to the skin as we were, we thought it best to curtail our admiration of the scenery and make our way home so as not to give the feverish climate the chance it always seems anxious to avail itself of.

For real delightful idleness the African Mahommedan *man* "licks creation," and I fancy no human being knows better how to "lazy" away time. We studied him here for the first time from the deck of the *Boussa; we* were not over busy *ourselves*—in fact only reading newspapers and watching natives—but our Mahommedan friends gave us many points and a severe beating. There they squatted all day long on the river bank, elbows on knees and one hand shading their eyes, their daily task being to watch their wives toil. *These* are the working bees of Africa; *they* it is who do all the labour of the factory and all the trading, their husbands seeing that they are not idle; for the woman's work means wealth to her husband, and wealth means more wives and yet again more wealth. Doubtless with civilisation relief will come to these hard-working women; at present they have not been educated up to a "strike,"[2] and know not the beauties of woman's rights and woman's wrongs.

[1] "The natives fancy there is a difference in the colour of the two streams, hence, in Haúsa, the Kwóra is styled *Fári N'rúa*, or the 'white water,' while the Binue is known as *Báki N'rúa*, the 'black water;' the Igára synonyms of these being *Ujimini Fúfu* and *Ujimini Dudu*."—*Baikie.*

[2] Mr. John Burns was formerly an engineer on a river steamer in the Niger

Before proceeding up the Benue River it will be as well to say something of the rapid progress of Mahommedanism in this quarter of Africa, and the part played in it by a people whose history (or such as is known of it) is perhaps unique.

The Fulas,[1] according to native tradition, are descended from Fut (Phut), grandson of Noah, and originally inhabited the Barbary coast, occupying themselves with the care of vast flocks and herds of cattle. Constant invasion of North Africa drove these people gradually south, until we find them, a century ago, wandering with their herds and spreading throughout that portion of Africa between Lake Tsad and Senegal, known as the Central and Western Sudan. The River Kworra divides roughly the territory now occupied by this immense tribe into two parts. The western portion, as far as Senegambia, has been peopled for centuries by the Futa Toro behind Senegal, and the Futa Jallon behind Sierra Leone, Toro and Jallon being the leaders of the first parties who came down from the north, and giving their names to the tribes. With these western Fulas we have nothing to do here.

The Fulas of the east now rule over the countries which were formerly known as the Hausa States,[2] besides many smaller outlying provinces, and the way they acquired possession of this immense tract of country is somewhat curious.

These pastoral Fulas, being Mahommedans and a people of some culture, heartily detested the heathen tribes

Territories; it seems a pity that he should have left this part of the world in ignorance of the value of his doctrines.

[1] The Fulbe (sing. Pullo) are known as Fulas by the Mandingos, Fullan by the Arabs, Filani by the Hausas, Felata by the Bornus, Goi by the Nupes, Angue by the Igbiras and Igaras.

[2] The old Hausa States proper were Gober, Daura, Biram, Kano, Katshena, Bautshi, and Zaria or Zozo; the bastard Hausa States were Zanfara, Kebbi, Gbari or Guari, Yauri, Nupe, a portion of Yoruba and Adamawa, besides Gurma and Zaberma.

amongst whom they resided, and to whom they were forced, through the paucity of their numbers, to be subservient. Relief came, however, about the year 1800, when one, Othman Dan Fodio, appeared on the scenes. This Dan Fodio was a simple Felata shepherd, who had, by some means or other, acquired a certain knowledge of the Arabic language, and came in time to be considered by his people a learned man. Living amongst an ignorant negro population in the northern Hausa States, it was not long before Sultan Bawa discovered him, and raised him to the position of Mallam,[1] or high priest, at his court. This gave Dan Fodio immense power, of which he was not slow to take advantage; and, at the death of Sultan Bawa, he proclaimed himself ruler of the state, as well as spiritual head of the people. The Fulas flocked to his standard, and he immediately commenced a religious war against the neighbouring heathen tribes. Country after country fell into the hands of these fanatical Mahommedans, who insisted on the conquered people embracing the faith of the Prophet. Having subjected the whole of the states between Lake Tsad and Timbuktu, and southwards to Yoruba, Dan Fodio set to work to portion out his kingdom, bestowing on his eldest son, Bello, the countries of Zanfara, Katshena, Daura, Kazori, Kano, Hadejiah, Bautshi, and Adamawa, whilst to his son Abdulahi he gave Gandu, Nupe, Ilorin, and Lafia.[2] The city of Sokotu was built, and Bello was proclaimed Sultan of the Empire of Sokotu, his brother Abdulahi fixing the capital of his empire at Gandu, no great distance from Sokotu.[3]

[1] *i.e.*, learned.

[2] Dan Fodio himself withdrew from the government, but continued to live at Sokotu with his son Bello. Sultan Bello reigned thirty years, and was succeeded (about 1835) by his brother Aliku, after whom the following reigned at Sokotu:—Amadu, Alihu, Amadu Rufai, Alihu Keremi, Abu Bekr, Mazu, and Omoru, who is the present Sultan, and grandson of Sultan Bello.

[3] At the present time the Sultans of Sokotu and Gandu consult with each

Thus the Mahommedan power sprung up, and gradually became firmly established in this part of Africa, continuing to spread southwards year by year until, at the present time, Islamism virtually reigns supreme in all the countries north, east, and west of Lokoja; whether it will receive a check here from the Chartered Company remains to be seen, but there can be no shadow of doubt that, up to the present time, Christian missionaries have interfered in no wise with the progress of the Mahommedans.

Far be it from me, as a Christian Englishman, to depreciate the work of the worthy members of Christian missions; doubtless they have done considerable good amongst a few pagan tribes on the Lower Niger during the past half century, but north of Lokoja they have effected nothing, which is not to be wondered at since all over the world attempts to Christianise Mahommedans have always proved futile; but it is a matter for regret that party bickerings and misunderstandings should interfere with the conversion of the heathen. Surely any Protestant will admit that a Roman Catholic is superior to a heathen, and any Roman Catholic will admit that Protestantism is better than paganism; but, wonderful to say, these petty jealousies, which hinder the propagation of the Gospel, are not confined to the question of sect, for *colour* also has played a great part, the hand of the white missionary being turned against his black fellow-worker.

South of Lokoja the French Roman Catholic missionaries and the members of the Church Missionary Society under Bishop Crowther have established mission-houses and done some good work; above that place they have had a

ether on political matters, and are ever ready to aid one another against a foreign foe. Though Gandu owes no allegiance to Sokotu, yet the latter Sultan bears the title of Amir Ul Mumimin (Commander of the Faithful), and Serikin Sudan (Ruler of the Sudan), and is considered, at any rate by his own people, superior to all other rulers.

missionary residing at Kipo Hill, in the Nupe country, for some years; they have sent a steamer for many miles up the Benue River and endeavoured to settle down at Abinsi and Loko, but no converts have been made amongst the Mahommedans.

Whilst at Lokoja we had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of an earnest lay missionary, Mr. Graham Wilmot-Brooke, who had spent some time in the Congo regions and North-West Africa; his ideas on the subject of missionary labour were new to us. We found him dressed as a Mahommedan, wearing the turban and tobe and removing his sandals indoors. He had been in the country but a few weeks, and was busy studying the Hausa language to better fit him for his work, and had drawn up an elaborate scheme for his operations amongst the Mahommedans, an outline of which may possibly interest some of my readers.

The nature of the work proposed by Mr. Wilmot-Brooke in his own words is briefly this :—"*Firstly*, distribution to native traders from all parts of the Hausa States of Scriptures, pamphlets, &c., translated into Hausa and printed in Arabic character; *secondly* (subsequently by a limited number of picked men), public preaching in Hausa and Nupe in the places where the Hausa literature had been received.

"The reasons for selecting a race professing Islam are :—Because two or three per cent. of the population can read, and because they are continually moving about, and it is believed that the small number who might accept Christ would be able to go from place to place over large tracts of country preaching the Gospel, as is now done by the much persecuted handful of converted Arabs in Morocco. The extreme laxity with which Islam is held by the Hausas would probably afford quiet intervals for preaching

at each place, before the preachers were interrupted by the chance arrival of some influential Fula, Arab from Tripoli, or exceptionally zealous Hausa *mallam*.

"The first department of the work, translation and distribution of the Scriptures, involves no difficulty. Even in Bokhara (to take an extreme case) such work is readily permitted by the Khan; it never excites Muslim fanaticism, they can easily tear up the paper if they wish. In all parts of the world this work can be carried on by British subjects, without exposing the Imperial Government to any risk of difficult responsibility.

"Preaching by word of mouth is on a different footing. In a country where the edicts of Islam are fully promulgated it is a crime against the state (according to strict Muslim law) for a Christian to try to persuade another man to adopt his faith. Therefore in the Hausa provinces, Nupe, and others, if ever a fanatical feeling were to arise, a Christian preacher would be liable to be treated as a criminal, in which case his Government would be responsible for his acts.

"If ever Mahommedan zeal should manifest itself in the Hausa provinces, any Christian government that had subjects engaged in preaching in those provinces would be involved in some little difficulty in rescuing those subjects from their dangerous position. As an outburst of Muslim zeal, at the instigation of some Arab, Fula, or angry *mallam*, is quite a possible contingency, it is obviously the wisest thing for any Christian government that wants to avoid all chance of disturbance to forbid its own subjects, for whose behaviour it will be held responsible, from entering Muslim territory with any avowed purpose contrary to the laws of a Muslim land, *e.g.*, preaching the Gospel.

"It is obviously necessary if even remote probability of political complications is to be avoided between the Muslim

and Christian governments, that any one entering Muslim territory for a purpose as above set forth should not be the subject of a Christian government; he must be free from its responsibilities, he must forfeit its privileges; he must furnish a distinct statement in writing to the representatives of his late government that he has renounced his citizenship, and accepts the full responsibility of committing himself to the tender mercies of his new sovereign, the ruler of the province in which he has chosen to reside and at whose beck and call he would be in the future. In case of his assassination the Imperial Government might be glad of such a letter.

"It seems also desirable that, on entering Muslim territory, he should present a letter to his new sovereign, stating his position and tendering the poll-tax.

"Where these conditions are complied with (together with native dress), as in Morocco, it is found that the helplessness of the new-comers disarms suspicion and fanaticism, and that even the most forward and energetic in the far interior rarely experience anything worse than short imprisonments and floggings and stonings from the worst of the mob. Even Muslim Arabs who have been converted to Christ usually escape with their lives, though this is the worst crime in the code of Islam." Mr. Wilmot-Brooke takes, I am afraid, an optimist's view of the situation, but his work should be watched with intense interest by all thinking Christians. Personally, I can see no hope of success in attempting to convert the Mahommedan, even in this part of the world; and I think it a pity that more attention should not be paid to the vile cannibals and idolaters who live on the Lower Niger, where the missionary has a virgin field for his labours.

To return to the subject of this chapter, the original

nomadic Fulas are said to have been of fair complexion,[1] with features more regular and hair less woolly than those of the negro; and even now, among the cattle-breeders who live away from towns, many copper-coloured individuals are to be found, though intermarriage with the various conquered aboriginal tribes is fast changing the Fula into a negro. The men are well-developed and muscular, those who have settled in towns appearing to be of finer physique than the nomadic Fulas, and assuming in their walk a most offensive air, or "swagger." They are clothed in pyjamas, tight at the ankle, and excessively loose everywhere else (the waistband, before being gathered in, being often fifteen feet in circumference). The body is covered with a flowing embroidered tobe, a kind of loose *bernouse*, or with a toga-like shawl of cotton, leaving the right arm bare for paddling or other work. A turban of white or dark-blue Kano cotton is worn on the head, the end of which (like the *litham* of the Tuaregs), is brought across the face, concealing the features below the eyes, and over the turban again, is worn, in hot or wet weather, a huge straw hat, stitched with gaily coloured strips of leather, whilst gri-gris, or verses of the Koran sewn up in leather, dangle from various parts of the head-dress. Slippers are worn on the feet, and when riding, long heelless boots. The upper classes are extravagant in the matter of dress, giving as much as £15 for a tobe, and £5 for pyjamas, though such costly garments would be of the finest wool or silk, imported from Northern Africa, and last a lifetime; the poorer classes dress as a rule in country-made cotton stuffs.

The dress of the women is very similar to that worn by the women of India, and consists of four or five pieces of

[1] Pul=ruddy, red. "Their name signifies *yellow* or *brown*. They are even called 'Abate,' *i.e.* white men, by the Jukos."—KOELLE, *Africa Polyglotta*, p. 21.

silk or cotton, the upper piece covering the head[1] as well as the body; the face, however, is left exposed. Eastern Fula men shave the head, and trim the hair on the face (when existing) in the orthodox Mahommedan fashion; the women wear their hair in plaits, the Nupes and Hausas also forming the hair of the crown of the head into a solid mass in the shape of a helmet. Western Fulas of both sexes grease the hair with palm nut oil or cow's butter, and wear it in long hanging plaits, after the manner of the Wangaras or Mandingoes. Anklets of brass and copper are worn by the women, and bangles of glass by the men above the elbow, and by the women on the wrist.

The Fula, like his brother Mahommedan of other parts, is in a measure a fatalist, though he places greater faith in charms. Verses of the Koran are sewn up in his clothing and hung about his person, his horse's bridle is weighed down with leather-covered texts, and the thatch of his huts is stuffed with extracts from his scriptures; should, however, these charms not avert disaster, the Hausa expression, "Alla ya yerda" (God wills it), accounts for everything.

The modes of living and dress vary slightly in the different parts of the vast Filani Empire, but their religion keeps the people together in the main. They celebrate three great annual festivals—*Id ul Fitr*, *Id ul Baqr*, and *Id ul Shahid* (Muharram).

The Id ul Fitr, or the feast of breaking the fast, takes place on the day following the appearance of the new moon in the month of Shawal, after the thirty days' fast of the Ramazan. All Mahommedans appear clothed in their best, fully armed, and proceed to the public place of prayer, where the Lemanu or head-priest officiates. The Id ul Baqr, or feast of sacrifice, is the Bairam of Turkey, and

[1] Female slaves are not permitted to cover the head, unless they become the wives of a prince or chief.

takes place on the tenth day after the appearance of the moon, in the month of Zulhajja. Blood sacrifices are offered up for the atonement of the sins of the congregation, which assembles at the field of prayer between eight and nine in the morning. The ruler of the country addresses his subjects, enjoining them to continue to live as devout followers of the Prophet, and promises that he will shortly hang his war-flag over his gateway, as a sign that he is prepared to lead his people in a religious war against some neighbouring heathen tribe. The men attend this festival armed to the teeth, and return home accompanied by musicians beating drums and singing.

The third festival is the ordinary Muharram of all Mahommedans, commemorating the martyrdom of Hassan and Husein, though the Fulas, as a rule, are quite ignorant of the origin of the feast, which they know as "Wowo," a word simply signifying a kind of annual amusement.

Hausa is the prevailing language among Mahommedans of this part of Africa, though the language of the various subjected tribes is much spoken. The original Fula tongue[1] is known only to the upper classes and the nomadic cattle-owners.[2] A little Arabic is understood by the priests or mallams, acquired principally by study of the Koran and the small stock of literature which comes in their way. Alhaj Omar is one of the few Fulas who has indulged in literature to any extent, and left behind him at his death some religious works which are much valued throughout the Sudan. He was a native of Masina, and met his

[1] "The Fula language is distinguished from most others by a remarkable peculiarity. It makes no distinction between the masculine and feminine genders, but divides all things, animate and inanimate, into two great classes —human beings and everything belonging to mankind on the one hand, and on the other everything else, whether animate or not. The former belong to what is called the *human* or *rational*, the latter to the *brute* or *irrational* gender."—*Keith Johnston.*

[2] Bororoji.

death during a rebellion at Timbuktu about 1859. His son, Ahmadu, is now sheikh or sultan of Masina, and has caused a certain amount of trouble to the French.

Although the Fulas have made such extensive conquests, there still remain certain tribes against whom they have been quite unsuccessful in their wars. In Bornu the Fulas suffered defeat and were driven out of the country to Adamawa. Burgu or Barba, adjoining Yoruba and Nupe, still remains independent, as does Gober, where Dan Fodio commenced to preach his *jihad*. A story of Filani treachery is related by the people of the Gbari or Guari state, which is not too creditable to Mahommedan zeal. Abuja was a small town in the Gbari country, inhabited by pagans, and in its turn became an object for Fula conquest. The Abujas, however, proved themselves too strong for the Mahommedans, who had recourse to the vilest treachery to carry out their ends. They settled down and lived in friendship with the pagans, attempting to teach them the doctrines of Islam; and after some time, at the Id ul Baqr, they persuaded the chiefs and principal men of the town to accompany them to the field of prayer, where they fell on them and slaughtered them, and so gained possession of their town. A few men and women escaped from Abuja, and built themselves a new town many miles away, where they taught their children to regard the Fulas as their bitterest foes. Time passed, and the new Abuja grew in size, and became a thorn in the side of the Fulas, the pagans resisting the Mahommedan attacks, and even seizing the small Fula villages, and to the present day they remain an unsubdued pagan tribe; and woe to the Fula who falls into their hands, for vengeance is still in the heart of the Abujas, and if they do not kill their Fula captives they send them away with both hands cut off.

Whatever the shortcomings of the Fulas, the fact remains that in less than a century they have conquered a tract of

country three quarters of a million square miles in extent, and reduced the heathen population to a state of semi-civilisation, persuaded them (perhaps by rather rough means) to embrace Mahommedanism, and united them in one comparatively strong government. The ruling Fulas, however, are now fast losing their thirst for conquest and their martial spirit, and are falling into a state of indolence. The time cannot be far distant when the reins of government will pass into the hands of a European power.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BENUE RIVER.

THE Benue River was unknown, except by vague report, until the night of the 25th October 1830, when the brothers Lander, paddling down the Kworra from Bussa or Boussa, drifted past the confluence, and saw that a huge river flowed into the Niger from the east. Prior to this no two natives appear to have had the same ideas about this river, but the popular belief was that the Niger itself flowed due east, and eventually joined the Nile. In 1833 the expedition of Messrs. Laird and Oldfield managed to ascend the Benue as far as Dagbo, about 100 miles from the confluence. No further exploration of the Benue took place until 1851, when Dr. Barth, who had then been travelling for two years in the countries about Lake Tsad, journeyed south, crossed the river at Tepe on the 18th June, and reached Yola, the capital of Adamawa, a few days later, returning thence, after a short stay, to Lake Tsad.

In 1854, Dr. Baikie's expedition was despatched from England with instructions to explore the Benue and to endeavour "to meet and afford assistance" to Dr. Barth. This expedition was successful in reaching Dulti, no great distance below Yola, but its leader was unable to gain any reliable information about Dr. Barth's movements.

The Church Missionary Society's steamer *Henry Venn* next appeared on the scenes and, in 1880, reached the town of Yola.

Another six years passed before any further ascent of the river was made, when the National African Company established trade at Ribago and Bubanjidda; the latter place, it is imagined, being very near the source of the Benue proper.[1]

For some years it was thought that the Benue flowed out of Lake Tsad or Chad, and Lander, Laird, and others therefore called it Chadda. It has, however, since been proved that there exists no connection between the basin of Lake Tsad and that of the Niger-Benue. The Bahr-el-Ghazal drains Lake Tsad towards the N.E., into the Bodele basin. It is, however, generally dry.[2]

Trade on the Benue has not as yet made very rapid strides, but there can be no doubt that it is a land of great promise in the near future, and it will probably prove when in thorough working order one of the most remunerative parts of West Africa.

Regular trade may be said to have commenced in 1874, when the West African Company began purchasing ivory at Bomasha, followed in 1876 by the Central African Company and Messrs. Miller Brothers. Work was carried on successfully for some time, but in May 1879, the Emir of Bomasha plundered the warehouses of the West African Company and murdered one of their men, forcing all three firms to abandon trade for the time being. Nothing daunted, they returned the following year, having amalgamated under the name of the United African Company, and established a trading station at Loko. French competition now somewhat interfered with English trade, but British gold

[1] "The name of this province also is entirely new, and is formed in a very remarkable way, being compounded of the name of the conqueror himself (Buba) and of that of his mother (Jidda). Bubanjidda is an extensive province, including the districts on the upper course of the Benue, and its capital is called Ray-Buba."—*Barth.*

[2] Doubtless rapid evaporation accounts for the fact that Lake Tsad, like other African lakes, is said to be rather decreasing in size than otherwise.

persuaded the foreigners to quit the field, and the National African Company stood alone.

In 1884 the intrepid David M'Intosh, accompanied by Consul Hewitt, visited all the countries near the river from Lokoja to Ibi, making treaties with the chiefs. A vigorous policy of extension was now determined on, and twenty-one trading-stations were opened between the two places above-mentioned.

A fall in the oil market shortly after this forced the Company to close nearly all these stations as, of course, they were as yet far from self-supporting. Consequently, in the latter part of 1886, the Royal Niger Company was only working the following stations:—Yola, Bakundi, Ibi, Abinsi, and Loko. Since then gradual progress has been made, and many more stations [1] opened; and, at the present time, trade on the Benue is established on a firm and business-like footing.

All was astir early on August 4th on the *Boussa;* and, as the sun's first rays lit up the waters of the confluence, we steamed away from Lokoja, piloted by the *Malachi*, and soon afterwards entered the Benue River, of which we were expecting so much, for the Company's officials whom we had met all spoke of it as a paradise compared with the Lower Niger.

Mr. William Wallace, the acting Agent-General of the Royal Niger Company, and Mr. Charles M'Intosh [2] are on board with us, to be henceforth our guides, philosophers, and friends during our voyage up this little-known stream. Our

[1] The following list shows the principal trading-stations of the Royal Niger Company on the Benue and the produce bought at each:—Mozum, rubber, gutta-percha; Bohu and Odeni, the same; Arago, gutta-percha, benni seed; Abinsi, the same; Ibi, ivory; Donga, rubber, benni seed, gutta-percha; Bakundi, ivory, benni seed; Mainaraiwa, gum-arabic; Koonini, gum, tin, benni seed; Numan, gum-arabic; Ribago (Garua), ivory, gum-arabic, gutta-percha. Benni seed yields a very fine oil, and is used for oil-cake.

[2] The Company's chief agent in the Benue, and brother of Mr. David M'Intosh.

first stoppage was at Mozum,[1] where we were met by the steam launch *Benue*, in charge of Mr. Dangerfield, who is to be attached to us with his little craft whilst we are in this river. Mozum is situated on the left bank, and its fringe of baobabs gives it a most picturesque appearance.

The news that the messenger of the Great White Queen had landed quickly spread throughout the village, and we were soon met by the chief and his head men, eager to pay their respects to the Commissioner. The chief is an Igara pagan, and gave us the idea of knowing his business as ruler of his people, which cannot be said of many of these second-rate African potentates.

The Niger Company is just re-opening trade here, which it had to stop for some time, as the chief on one occasion maltreated some of its officials.

The inhabitants are mostly of the Basa tribe, though there are a few Mohammedan refugees from Nupe settled in the place. The Basas[2] are an industrious, energetic, and muscular people, but are regarded by the Nupes, whose vassals they formerly were, as rebels, since they cast off the yoke of servitude, fled from Mahommedan oppression across the river, and established themselves as an independent tribe. Their language in idiom and words has a strong resemblance to Nupe. They are heathens, and worship the idol Kuti; little, however, is as yet known of their customs.[3]

As we wandered into the bush round the village, with a little 28-bore gun, in search of ornithological specimens, a

[1] Rubber and gutta-percha are the only native products at present.

[2] These Basas should not be confounded with a tribe of the same name dwelling to the westward of the confluence, with whom they have no connection.

Baikie mentions two other Basa tribes, one in *Oru*, Niger Delta, the other to the northward of the Kru coast.

[3] Their mode of burial is somewhat peculiar; the corpse, wrapped in white, is placed in the grave in a standing position, together with a bag of provisions for the journey. After the funeral a whole month is spent in mourning (especially if the deceased were a rich man or an official), finishing up with a general meeting of the relatives, who spend a day in feasting and dancing.

great crowd of people of both sexes followed us, and the fall of a bird seemed to strike them with awe; a small hand-camera frightened them still more, but they were quickly re-assured by our interpreter, and we became the best of friends. Chaffing the men about their powers of shooting with the bows and arrows which they all carried, we induced at length a shy youth to try his skill at the Commissioner's handkerchief placed on a stump some sixty paces off. On his right hand the bowman carried a kind of dagger of steel, in shape like the single blade of a pair of scissors, evidently intended to be used at close quarters if he missed his enemy. Holding his bow horizontally at his waist, and fixing his eyes on the mark, the modest archer let fly his reed-shafted poisoned arrow, which, as much I fancy to his own astonishment as ours, pierced the handkerchief full in the centre. A shout of applause went up from the crowd, but in spite of offers of any number of pieces of cloth, no other man would try his luck.

The whole incident brought forcibly to my mind an almost similar scene which I witnessed a few years before at Leh, the capital of Western Tibet. A friend and myself had been watching a Booti game of polo and some other national sports, and an old gentleman, who had the reputation of being a skilled archer, was brought to our notice. Thinking to chaff the aged bowman, my friend flung his shooting cap into the air, shouting, "A rupee you don't hit it." But the words were hardly out of his mouth when an arrow from the Booti's bow sent daylight through the cap, and the old man beamed all over, but nothing would tempt him to another shot.

Leaving Mozum, the river, as we ascend, flows through a well-wooded country; and, although it has still to rise some[1]

[1] It is a curious fact that the dates of the annual rise and fall of the Benue appear to correspond with those of the Nile.

feet, it rivals in breadth the Lower Niger. The navigation, even at this time of year, is not all plain sailing, for every season the sand-banks shift and steamers have to be perpetually crossing from one side of the river to the other to find a sufficient depth of water. In the dry months, when the Benue is not navigable for anything larger than launches, the Company's officials, in their frequent canoe trips from station to station, chart down the channel, and a few of their native employees are trained as pilots. We saw few signs of life on the banks, for the country has been devastated by the constant slave raids of the Mahommedans. In the days of Oldfield and Baikie the northern bank was thickly populated, but since then the inhabitants have either been carried off into slavery or have taken refuge to the south of the river, where the Mahommedans are only just commencing operations.

The village of Bohu, where we landed in the afternoon in a heavy downpour of rain, is formed of round grass huts, erected close to the water. It is a very dirty specimen of a Basa village, but its inhabitants are eager to barter their rubber and gutta-percha[1] for Manchester goods.

At night we anchored in mid-stream, and for once were fairly happy. The insects did not trouble us, and the afternoon's rain had lowered the temperature to comfort point.

Passing the villages of Amaran and Amagede in the morning, at 4 P.M. we reached the important town of Loko on the right bank, where the Royal Niger Company has a large station, though trade is slack. Loko is the port of the

[1] Unless it should be imagined that the African of these parts is a hard-working individual, who spends his time cultivating the various things required by the English Company, I may as well point out that he cultivates nothing except what he requires for his own food; everything which he barters with the Company he finds growing wild in the bush, and he has simply to gather and bring it to the station.

Mahommedan State of Nassarawa, whose emir, a tributary of the Sultan of Sokotu, resides at the town of Nassarawa, two days inland from the river. His territory extends across the south bank up to the country of the Akpoto pagans, whom he is incessantly harassing and carrying off into slavery.

North of the river, Nassarawa is bounded on the west by Nupe, and on the east by the Kaffi tribe; while on the south bank, the Basas on the west and the Agatus on the east furnish the Mahommedans with an extensive tract of country wherein to carry on their predatory warfare.

Hearing that the Emir and his war-chiefs were in the town, the Commissioner despatched a messenger to inform him of the arrival of the Queen of England's envoy, and to request his presence on board our steamer. His answer was polite, and accompanied by a peace-offering of a sheep, which was a most welcome addition to our larder.

Shortly afterwards the Emir himself rode down to the river bank, surrounded by a large company of mounted men; their horses were poor, weedy-looking things, and weighed down with huge high-peaked saddles, gaily decorated with Hausa leather-work, but nevertheless they *were* horses, and almost the first we had seen in West Africa. The Emir was clothed in voluminous garments of white and dark blue Kano cotton. On his head was a turban of white, hung round with numerous leather-sewn charms, and hiding his features was the usual face-cloth of dark muslin. Embroidered slippers and a heavy cross-hilted sword completed his dress as a Fula chief. He was received with much ceremony, a guard of honour of the Royal Niger Constabulary being drawn up on deck; though I am not certain that he understood at first what it meant, and he probably thought that he had fallen into a trap. However, his litham concealed any fear his face might have shown, and when he

entered the Commissioner's presence he seemed quite at home. The Emir himself is a man of about thirty-five years of age, and his wuzeer, who appears to be the astuter of the two, is perhaps a little younger. Both, I should say, are good samples of ruffians of the deepest dye, though they were the pink of politeness during the interview, showering down compliments on our heads which taxed the ingenuity of our Hausa interpreter to reply to in corresponding terms. However, half-an-hour saw the business through, and we, at all events, were not sorry when the Emir rose, for his retinue, who had crowded in after him, were of the unwashed order, and our little saloon, for the nonce the durbar hall, was rapidly becoming laden with a most pungent African bouquet.

The Emir expressed a wish for a private audience with the "White Queen's Man," so an hour after dark was fixed when he should be received again. The constabulary conducted him home, and were "dashed" for their trouble with a sheep, which seems to have afforded the soldiers a certain amount of enjoyment, judging from the sounds of revelry which arose from the lower deck far into the night.

Loko, which we wandered through before darkness came on, is a clean town, and said to contain about 4000 inhabitants. Its construction is similar to all towns in this part, and looks like a collection of farm-yards full of round hay-ricks, fenced by matting some seven feet high. The people did not seem particularly interested in our presence among them, and we even spent some time watching a marriage ceremony, without the slightest notice being taken of us. Whether this is due to apathy or politeness I do not know, but one thing is certain, *la haute politesse* is cultivated by these Fula people with much success, and their salutations out of doors would put to the blush our best performances in that line. Two casual acquaintances, meeting on

the road, instead of nodding a friendly "good day," halt when a few paces from each other, and kneel down on one knee, repeating the word *sannu* a number of times; more intimate friends, whilst kneeling, grasp hands and pay compliments of some length to each other, the one pressing the other's hand to his heart and forehead. The Eastern *salaam* with the hand is unknown to these Mahommedans. About 8 P.M. two dirty-looking scoundrels came on board, and said they were the Emir and his wuzeer. For some time we thought they were some of the rabble of the town trying to impose on us and get presents; but, after a little conversation, we discovered that the gentlemen were what they professed to be. The regal robes had been cast aside, and the Emir had disguised himself so that his people should not know of his secret visit. His clothes were soiled, and over his turban he wore, slightly awry, an enormous straw hat; his face-cloth was discarded, and his mouth was full of half-chewed kola nut—in fact, his general appearance was that of a man who had been dining out; he was perfectly sober, however, and fired off his customary salutations with much earnestness. These finished, he commenced an oration, which had evidently, from its glibness, been deeply studied, if not learned by heart (his teacher, I have no doubt, being the worthy wuzeer), and this is the gist of his talk. His father and his father's father had been fighting-men, and he was following in their footsteps; his people loved war, and cared not to dig the ground; they were no traders, but lived by plundering the pagan tribes. His annual tribute to his master at Sokotu [1] was 200 slaves, and it was a hard matter to procure that number in the year. He found that the pagans were becoming more difficult to subdue, and offered more resistance than formerly;

[1] The Emir of Nassarawa is under the jurisdiction of Zahria, who is again under the direct jurisdiction of the Sultan of Sokotu.

he was, therefore, desirous of purchasing rifles and ammunition, but the Niger Company refused to sell them to him, and he now begged the Commissioner to intercede for him, and induce the white traders to sell him weapons. The Commissioner told him that his request was an impossible one; the Queen of England hated oppression and loved peace, and had therefore forbidden her subjects to sell arms to the natives. The Emir and his minister looked very dejected at this unexpected piece of news, but cheered up a bit when they heard that presents were to be given to them from the English Government. Etiquette forbids these chiefs to receive presents in person, therefore the royal servants came for them later in the evening, taking away, with unconcealed delight, a sword, musical-box, gong, and a number of pieces of embroidery; and, as the thanks which were sent back were profuse, I fancy the Emir was well pleased with what he received.

We had a miserable night here—one of those nights which are never forgotten; music and singing, accompanied by banging of drums went on all through the dark hours, and an old bull-frog that lived in a pool on the bank made the night doubly hideous with his hoarse croakings; but we settled accounts with this latter gentleman, and ere we left our moorings in the morning we laid out his corpse on the edge of his watery home.

Ascending the river above Loko, we passed the Mahommedan countries of Kaffi and Bautshi on the north bank, opposite to which dwell the pagan Agatus, unable to call their souls their own. Few villages are seen from the steamer, as the giant forests which grow down to the water, and the high grass, conceal everything a few yards inland. At night we anchored between two pagan tribes, the Apokus on the north bank and the dreaded Mitshis[1]

[1] Called Muntshi by the Fulas and Hausas.

on the south. Extra watches were set on board, since the ways of the Mitshis are treacherous and they bear malice towards the white man. In 1885, the National African Company explored the River Katsena, which flows into the Benue from the south, through the heart of the Mitshi country. The people, always notorious for their lawlessness and treachery, appeared friendly, and consequently the Company established among them three factories (or trading-stations), on the Katsena, and three on the Benue itself. November of the same year found the factory at Adasha completed, and an iron store-shed erected. The Company then commenced stocking the place with European goods, but on the first day a few Mitshis entered the store, and stole some of the kegs of powder. Messrs. Griffiths and Hoyland, who were in charge of the district, arrived on the spot, and the former had an altercation with the chief. These people, like many others of this part of Africa, had always had an idea that white men were invulnerable, and, it is imagined partly to test this, a Mitshi shot Hoyland with a poisoned arrow, whilst he and Griffiths were conversing with the chief. The two Englishmen now retired to their boat, amidst a shower of arrows, none of which, however, took effect. Hoyland died before reaching Abinsi, three miles up the river, so deadly is the Mitshi poison. The factory was plundered by the natives, and everything taken away, even to the large iron pillars of the store shed.

Mr. Griffiths in the following month met his death in an almost similar manner to his companion Hoyland. He was stocktaking at the stations of the Katsena river, and when on his way to the highest station, the Mitshis of a place called Tiga beckoned to him; he foolishly went towards the sandbank on which they were standing, and, leaving the shelter of the house of the canoe, went forward to the bows, and entered into conversation with the crowd.

While this was going on, another party of Mitshis boarded the centre of the canoe, seized all the weapons, and then commenced firing arrows. Two canoemen were killed on the spot, and Griffiths was struck, but managed to push his canoe out into mid-stream unpursued, only, however, to expire in a few moments. His body drifted down the river, and, being found next day by the Mitshis, was decapitated, and the skull, it is said, is still being used by them as a fetish.

Steaming against the current all day, still having the Mitshi country on our right, and that of the Apokus and Aragos[1] on our left, we passed the mouth of the Katsena River, and later in the afternoon Mount Herbert, one of those extraordinary solitary hills, rising straight from the plain and covered with verdure, which are not uncommon about the Benue. At nightfall we lay at a respectful distance off the landing-place for the Orufu Mines (situated about five miles south of the river), which were at one time being worked successfully by the Niger Company for silver and galena.

At the beginning of 1886 the Mitshis commenced to harass Mr. Charles M'Intosh, who was conducting the operations at the mines. For some time he kept them quiet with presents, but eventually had to resort to force, burning their town and defeating the chiefs, not, however, before he had lost his two European companions and two West Coast natives. Later in the same year the Company sent a punitive expedition against the tribe generally, and destroyed many of their towns; trade in the country, however, had to be abandoned, and no intercourse has since been held with these wild natives.

[1] The large Bautshi kingdom lies north of the territory of these tribes; its capital is Lafia, and the people, like their neighbours on the east and west, are Mahommedans. Its boundaries are Kano and Bornu on the north, Muri and the River Benue on the south, Adamawa on the east, and Zaria and Nassarawa on the west.

The Mitshis are a difficult people to deal with, since they acknowledge no one as head of the whole tribe, and live in independent families, fearing no one, yet feared by all foreign tribes, the dread of their poisoned arrows keeping them almost safe from attack. Their poison is said to be the most effective known in Africa, death ensuing within a few minutes after the arrow has pierced the skin. No antidote has yet been found for it, and its ingredients, which are supposed to contain both animal and vegetable poisons, are the secret of the tribe. In appearance it is a dark green slimy substance, and is put on fresh in a thick coating, covering well all the barbs of the arrow. Mr. Dangerfield, on one occasion, was struck on the side by one of these diabolical little weapons, and though the point only just broke the skin, yet his life was in danger for some time, and to this day a large bruise-like mark remains where he was wounded.

I think there was a sort of feeling of relief among our crew when, the next morning, we had left the Mitshi country, for they are rather exposed in their hammocks on the lower deck, and a well-directed volley of arrows might have crippled our movements considerably; but I fancy the sight of so big a steamer as the *Boussa* rather overawes the natives, especially as they imagine that her funnels are capable of being lowered, and used as heavy guns, though I must confess that, when we did see any natives on the bank, they appeared to be filled with curiosity more than anything else, and stood to gaze at us, resting the while on their spears.

During the day (8th August) we landed on the north bank for an hour or two in the Muri country, hoping to find game of some sort, but, with the exception of a couple of crocodiles and a duck, we got nothing to shoot at; the grass everywhere was dense, and towered far above our

heads, so that it was quite impossible to penetrate more than a few yards from the river; footprints of hippos and large monkeys were visible on the sand, but the animals themselves were somewhere else, we therefore contented ourselves by adding to our now rapidly increasing collection of small birds. A sergeant of constabulary, Samson by name, though he must be a disappointment to his ambitious godfathers and godmothers, since he is far below the average size of a West Coast African, has become an apt pupil in the art of taxidermy, and skins our little specimens most carefully. As can be imagined, he is an immense boon, saving us an infinity of trouble. People who sit in the cool climate of England, and read of collections being made abroad, can hardly realise the labour of preserving specimens in a hot country. If the collector has to skin his own birds after having shot them, he must work hard indeed, for everything must be done within twenty-four hours—nothing *keeps* in these tropical countries. To remove the skins from twenty birds at a sitting might be an easy task for one of Mr. Rowland Ward's assistants, but to an amateur, no matter what the climate he is in, it would be almost an impossibility; but our henchman, Samson, will sit all day, regardless of heat, insects, or any other annoyance, and skin and skin and skin.

At 9 P.M. we reached Ibi (the Benue head-quarters of the Niger Company), having run some hours by moonlight, quite contrary to all customs of navigation in this river. A walk ashore to stretch our legs before "turning in" was most welcome, and the knowledge that the morrow was proclaimed a halt made our heads lie easy on the heated pillows.

Sport was the order of the day next day for me, with Messrs. Wallace and Dangerfield as companions, and no cheerier companions could one desire. Soon after sunrise

we were in the saddle, and, rifles on back, riding through the native town of Ibi, and out into the country beyond. Skirting some patches of cultivation outside the low mud walls surrounding the town, we took a narrow pathway to the southwards, which led us into an open park-like country, where stretches of high grass, dotted with fine trees, met the eye on all sides. Guinea fowls and partridges, disturbed at their morning feed, ran before us, as we cantered along the water-covered path; birds of innumerable varieties, and gaudy butterflies, seemed to be rejoicing in the glorious sunshine, for this is the wet season, and deluging rain is more common than the bright sun. Everything is under water now: the grassy expanse before us is, in reality, but a swamp, our pathway but a rivulet, draining the land on either side, and our rivulet soon leads us to a stream—a stream that is in Africa, a river in England; cautiously we make our horse-boys go ahead to show us the depth of water, which comes right up to their chins as they walk across. We ride in, our little 13-hand ponies struggling manfully through, the water leaving only their heads and necks dry, and wetting us to our middles. This was not a pleasant way of beginning a day's outing; however, it mattered little in the end, for it was not long before dark clouds rolled up and obscured the sun, then opened, and for four long hours poured forth a drenching rain.

Wet through, we formed a line and scoured the sodden country in quest of antelope; sport, however, at this time of the year is hardly worthy of the name, the height of the grass hiding everything. One gets only a snap shot at the game, and there is none of the real excitement of the chase; but, all the same, we felt rewarded for our trouble by having bagged a couple of bucks[1] at the close of the day. In the dry season this country is an almost barren plain, and herds

[1] *Cobus kob* (kob antelope).

of antelope roam over it unmolested; the natives are no sportsmen, and the few Europeans in the country are far too busy to have any time to spare for pursuing game. Lions are said to be not uncommon, and herds of elephants frequent the heavy forests a little further inland. Doubtless in the not too distant future, when the black man has discovered that the road to wealth (and therefore to true happiness) passes through the money-bags of the white globe-trotter, the wily Juko will welcome the caravan of the English sportsman, and the latter might certainly do worse than spend a "hot-weather" near Ibi. A weary ride home in the dusk brought to an end a day of African amusement; and as we neared the town, the notes of a bugle, sounding the "mess-call," rang out clearly through the silent air. I had been half dozing in my saddle, and thought I had been dreaming of things military at home; but, on reaching the station, I found that the "call" was a reality—Mr. M'Intosh was "dining" the Commissioner, and the solitary bugler of the Hausa detachment, being a man of enterprise, thought it a fitting opportunity to display his abilities.

We halt at Ibi yet another day, chiefly for political reasons, for the chief and his head men have to be interviewed.

Ibi is an independent Juko town, though, to escape the oppression of the surrounding Mahommedans, the chief has placed himself and his people under the protection of the Royal Niger Company. The Juko country is bounded on the north by the Benue River, on the west by the Mitshi tribes, on the east by the Mahommedans of Bakundi, and its southern boundary lies in unexplored lands, somewhere adjacent to the north-western limits of the German *sphere of influence.* The capital, Wukari, is situated about thirty-five miles south of Ibi, and the whole country is fertile

and well wooded, being watered by the Donga, or Wukari River, and its tributaries, which flow into the Benue above Ibi. The Jukos, though pagans, are much under Mahommedan influence, and pay complimentary tribute to the Emir of Muri, to avoid being raided. They speak a language of their own, as well as Hausa, and are peacefully inclined and eager for trade. We spent the greater part of the day on shore, inquiring into the working of the Niger Company, and interviewing natives. The Company's station is by far the most comfortable-looking place we have yet seen—a cool thatched *bungalow*, surrounded by a well-kept garden, stands in the centre of this remote little English settlement, tidy gravelled pathways lead from the landing-stage to the various store-sheds, and in the middle of a bright green lawn rises up a lofty flag-staff from which proudly floats the white ensign, bearing the badge of the Company in its corner.

In the afternoon the station presented a curious spectacle: the chief, after much explanation and persuasion, had summoned his warriors and the *belles* of Ibi to be photographed. The men assembled in groups in full war-paint, armed with swords, knives, shields, spears, and bows and arrows; the women, dressed in their best white cloths, stood shyly about, trying to hide their quaint *coiffures* behind the stalwart forms of their husbands. Hausas, Fulas, and Jukos were all represented here, but seemed to have little idea of what was taking place; they, however, proved amenable to discipline, and were easily grouped, though of course it was quite impossible to keep them steady, and everything therefore had to be done instantaneously.

As we left our moorings at daybreak, a drizzling rain was falling, and continued for some hours, reducing the temperature to the agreeable coolness of 75°. Above Ibi, the river still continues a magnificent stream, a mile or more in

width. The Muri kingdom stretches along the north bank, and, after passing the mouth of the Donga River, the Bakundi kingdom commences, and extends along the south bank as far as the Tarabba, or Bakundi River. The emirs of these two important Mahommedan states are brothers, and vassals of the Sultan of Sokotu. The Commissioner deferred his interviews with them until our return down the river.

Few villages or inhabitants were seen during our day's run of fifty miles, the country still remaining densely wooded, with occasional open plains of high grass. At dusk the river had slightly narrowed, and we lay between two high black walls of impenetrable forest; once we thought we heard a lion's distant roar, but otherwise all was magnificently still—not a ripple on the water, not a rustle among the trees—and as we sat on deck, gazing pensively into the black night, the moon, almost at the full, rose gradually above the dark belt of forest, and shed a silvery lustre over the water. It was one of the grandest night scenes I can remember, and certainly one which can never be equalled out of the tropics.

The following day the scenery of the river underwent a change—the country became more open. Numbers of Dum palms[1] for the first time were noticeable among the other trees, and, in the distance, low ranges of hills broke the hitherto monotonous outline of forest. At 6 P.M. we reached Mainaraiwa, one of the Company's wooding-stations, and, being short of fuel, we made fast for the night to one of three huge Kuka or monkey bread-fruit trees.[2]

About a mile from the wooding-station, and on a small

[1] Deleb or Palmyra ?

[2] *Adansonia digitata.* Its bark is an article of trade, the fibre making good ropes. The fruit, which resembles the jack-fruit of Eastern countries, after undergoing a process of crushing and drying, is an excellent substitute for a sponge, in appearance like the loofah of Egypt.

river of the same name, stands the Muri village of Maiṅaraiwa, where a trading-station has been established by the Company. The inhabitants, who are not numerous, though professing Mahommedanism, are a wild and uncivilised-looking lot.

As the process of wooding the steamer was still only partially completed, we wandered off in the morning in search of birds for Samson; numerous little specimens were gathered, besides a handsome white egret and a spur-winged goose.[1]

Later in the day we received a visit from the Emir of Muri's head executioner, who was attended by his assistant, bearing his weapons of office; he was a most intelligent individual, and explained his method of operating with evident pride. With a murderous-looking club the assistant smites the victim on the head, and as he falls towards the executioner, his head is neatly taken off by that gentleman with a sharp sword. The Commissioner asked him with much seriousness if he would kindly execute his assistant to show us how it was done, which seemed to tickle the executioner immensely—I do not think I have ever seen a native laugh more heartily. He went on shore still laughing, and, as we steamed away shortly afterwards, he was evidently telling his friends on the bank what a funny fellow the Queen's Messenger was.

Our first mishap occurred to-day. I was busy writing in the little saloon, as we were under full steam, when a hubbub arose on the lower deck, and, running out to learn the cause, I saw the heavy surf-boat manned and being paddled swiftly down stream. The *Boussa* reversed her

[1] This bird is common to the whole of West Africa, and specimens are to be seen in the Zoological Gardens in London. The spur on the point of the wing bone is about the size of a tiger's claw, and is doubtless used for fighting. During our visit to the Benue, we also shot some plover and duck having similar though smaller spurs on the wing.

engines, and drifted down the river, for there was a man overboard. It appears that one of the constabulary guard was washing his clothes on the edge of the lower deck (which is only a foot or so out of water, and without a rail of any kind), when he must have lost his balance and fallen into the river, for his comrades say that they heard a cry from the water astern of the vessel, and saw the wretched man's head go under. A rush was made for the boat which was towed alongside, and within a minute it was loose, but nothing was again seen of the ill-fated Hausa, though we stopped an hour or more looking about. Possibly the current, which runs swiftly beneath the surface, carried him under, and, as he was unable to swim, he probably never had a chance from the first; the crocodiles, which swarm in the river, may also have had a hand in his death. I am afraid the feelings of the African are not very sensitive, and I am certain that a couple of hours after the occurrence his brothers in arms ceased to mourn their comrade's loss.

At mid-day we reached Lau, where we had to take in more wood, our consumption at the speed we travel being enormous. This is a small station, under a native agent, and merely a branch of the larger trading-station of Koonini, which lies a little higher up the river. Messrs. Zweifel and Watson, the European agents at the latter place, came down to see the Commissioner, and rather alarmed us by their appearance, as they had recently had their heads shaved to keep them cool. Mr. Zweifel is of German extraction, and a man of vast energy and knowledge; he has latterly devoted his attentions to the natural products of the country, and professes to have found in his district sixty or seventy varieties of gum.

Tin is now being brought into Lau in large quantities by the natives, and appears to be of excellent quality. It is

collected from the streams near the hills, and doubtless, when the country is opened up, it will prove a valuable product, since the mountains whence the tin-bearing streams flow must be rich in this article. While walking through the native town in the afternoon, we came on one of the most pitiable sights I have ever witnessed: outside a hut, seated in the sun, was a slave girl, fettered hand and foot. We tried to enter into conversation with her, but could not get her to take the slightest notice of us; as we stood watching her, her master, a young and insolent-looking Mahommedan came up, and we asked him why he was treating the wretched creature so harshly, to which he answered that she had been guilty of theft and desertion, and therefore he was forced to put her in irons. We made a small collection of spears and knives here, purchasing them with Manchester cottons, needles, and salt, the latter being in greatest request. Hausa traders offered us pieces of leather, dyed a brilliant red, and tiny bottles of rose-oil scent, which, they said, had come across the desert from Tripoli.

Leaving Lau in pelting rain, as soon as it was light, we steamed away north-east. The scenery on both banks presents a far grander appearance than it has hitherto done, ranges of mountains stretch away on either side of the river, the Muri hills on our left, some six miles or so inland, rising to a height of several thousand feet, while away in the distance, on the south bank, the Fumbina range forms a background to the verdant scene.

At noon we stopped at Jen, a small pagan town on the north bank, to purchase some livestock. The inhabitants, who crowded down to the river to see our steamer, were the veriest savages, the majority of both men and women being without clothing of any kind; they belong to the Batta tribe (whose country extends along the north bank up to Ribago), and appear to be a most friendly people. Their

astonishment at the sight of the *Boussa* was great, and when they saw her paddles put in motion they simply shrieked with excitement, and tore along the banks after us, waving their spears over their heads, and wishing us good-bye.

The country through which we were passing all day is thickly populated, and we frequently came on grass-hutted villages, peeping out from the fields of high corn,[1] whose inhabitants generally fled to the bush, with all their household goods and gods, on our first appearance, for these heathen tribes as yet know little about the white man, and imagine every stranger to be their enemy.

The following day the country appeared to improve in aspect still more; villages, surrounded by plantations of Indian and Guinea corn, lie dotted along the banks a mile or two apart; the Muri hills stand out boldly to the north, running almost parallel to our course, and, viewed from the river through our glasses, seem to be a succession of little parks, walled in by high black precipitous cliffs. Nothing is at present known about these highlands, except that they are sparsely inhabited by wild hill tribes. We

[1] "The kinds of corn grown along the Benue are four, namely, maize, or Indian corn (*Zea mays*), two kinds known along the coast as Guinea or Dáwa (often, though incorrectly, *Dower*) corns, and Góro. The first is universally cultivated; the stalks grow to a height of from 6 to 8 feet, and it is known in Hausa as Másara. It is used mostly whole, being roasted and eaten either alone or with a little pepper and salt, in both of which ways it is very palatable. It is more seldom ground. The ripe grain is yellow, but is also found white, purple, or red. The Guinea corns are also widely spread, especially one kind, known as Dáwa or Dáwa-Masara; the other, called Dawura, being more rare. They are species of *Holcus*, and the stalks grow to a height of from 8 to 10 feet, or even upwards. The fruit is arranged in loose panicles, and the grains, when ripe, are pale-red, though white and dark-coloured varieties also occur. This grain is used, when ground, for making bread and other articles of food; the sweetest and most pleasant native beer is prepared from it, and a red dye is said to be obtained from the ripe stalks. The fourth kind, named Góro, is very abundant along the Benue. It is a species of *Penicillaria*, and its small, rounded, greenish-yellow seeds are nearly sessile, on a large cylindrical spike. It is in daily household use, and most of their beer is prepared from it, though it is not so palatable as the beer from the Dáwa."—*Baikie.*

passed a few villages[1] in the morning, the inhabitants as a rule concealing themselves as the steamer went by, and, at 10 A.M., we stopped at Numan, a large pagan village on the south bank, whose chief is an old man, and very friendly to the white traders. The village is rather picturesquely situated, and well-shaded by large trees. Fields of corn and cassava surround the little grass huts, and herds of healthy-looking cattle graze about the land on the outskirts of the cultivation; a number of sturdy-looking ponies were also to be seen, in fact we appeared to have come to a land of plenty. The inhabitants fled from their village as we landed, leaving their chief and half-a-dozen followers to receive us alone. The old man seemed pleased at our visit, and took us to a shady tamarind tree, under which the Commissioner held a lengthy palaver. The people, seeing that things were apparently going smoothly, gradually returned, and, in half-an-hour, we were objects of curiosity to thousands of naked and wild-looking men armed with spears and bows.[2]

About two hours' steam above Numan, we came to a group of three or four villages, on the left bank of the river, inhabited by the Bula tribe, a wild and turbulent pagan people. When we reached the first village, not a soul was visible; the others also were similarly deserted, the reason of the flight of the inhabitants being that they were uncertain of what was going to happen, since the few dealings they had hitherto had with white men were somewhat peculiar. In 1883, when a launch of the National African

[1] The principal of which, Opi and Chamal, are inhabited by the pagan Basamas, whose chief town, Basama, lies about 20 miles north of the river. Little or nothing is known about these people, and their capital has never been visited by a European.

[2] The bow and leather quiver, containing a couple of dozen poisoned arrows, are slung over the left shoulder; in the right hand is carried a single spear, ready for use, whilst another half-dozen spears are borne in the left hand, their blades being protected by a cow-skin sheath.

Company was proceeding up the river to Yola, a quantity of firewood was purchased from the Bulas, but, after it had been paid for, the natives refused to allow it to be taken on board, and drove the launch from the spot. Two years later they again gave evidence of their evil disposition by attacking a surf-boat of the Company, which was being paddled down stream from Yola under Mr. Davenport's care. Fortunately no lives were lost on this occasion, although many arrows fell into the boat. In 1886, a fine of fifty sheep was imposed on the Bulas, which was called for later in the year; the tribe, however, refused point blank to pay anything, and consequently one of their villages was shelled and burned by the Niger Company's steamer *Kuka*, the fifty sheep were collected by the troops, and the people informed that they had better behave themselves in future. Since then the Bulas have been fairly quiet, and have even made trading treaties with the Company.

We sent a Juko interpreter on shore to try and find the chief, and, after some time, he succeeded in unearthing an old man who was too infirm to run away, and told him what was wanted. The inhabitants, who were all the while hiding in the millet fields, were, after a bit, persuaded to return to their villages, though, from the way they handled their spears, they were evidently uncertain as to whether we meant treachery. Confidence was, however, shortly restored, chiefly by our giving out that we wished to purchase wood and fowls; both articles were brought to us in abundance, and, before we left the place, the *Boussa* looked as if we were holding a poultry show of the longest-legged and skinniest old birds in the world.

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the waist, which serves the purpose of suspending that portion of themselves which Mahommedan law removes. This strange habit, they say, is intended by the Bula to show his independence and taunt his Muslim neighbours.[1]

We spent about two hours among these primitive people, during which time all the inhabitants returned to their homes. As we left our moorings an amusing incident occurred, which showed that the instincts of sport (or greed?) are strong in the native of these parts. One of the exhibits of our poultry show, which was tethered on the deck of the steamer, got away and fluttered overboard, imagining that he could fly ashore; he had, however, rather overestimated his abilities, for, after about four flaps of the wing, he fell helplessly into the river, and was rapidly carried down stream by the current. Some one on the bank saw his struggles, and raised the alarm, when immediately thirty or forty little one-man canoes darted out from the village, and went off in pursuit of the gay old bird, who was now doing his six knots an hour without an effort. Every one was yelling and paddling, and the race was an exciting one; the canoes began to close in and hustle one another, the paddlers lost their temper, and hit each other over the head; some of the tiny crafts upset, but at last one individual, more cunning than his brothers, grabbed old gallus by the neck, and bore him off in triumph to the bank. All this excitement about a leggy old fowl, whose outside value, before he started on his water excursion, was fourpence. Either these Bulas are true sportsmen, or they are extremely poor!

[1] The Bulas are an ill-conditioned lot, and hated by all their neighbours, with whom they are constantly fighting. They cultivate the land sufficiently to provide themselves with food, and they keep a few sheep and cattle. Fishing is carried on by them to some extent, chiefly by means of large hoop-nets, working on a pivot, similar to those of the Lower Niger. I have also seen them at night, spearing fish by torchlight, standing for the purpose on a low structure over the river.

At night we anchored off Gire, a large Batta village on the right bank, and immediately sent off to ask the headmen to come on board, which, considering they had probably never seen a white man before, they did more promptly than we anticipated. Dozens of canoes came alongside, the paddlers raising a tremendous din, and crowds of natives put in an appearance to see the new arrivals. They presented rather a weird spectacle in the flickering lamp-light, as they seated themselves in a semi-circle on the deck, opposite the Commissioner, and commenced a volley of salutations in the Battare language.[1] They seemed well pleased with the interview, and told us much about their country and neighbours. Apparently, before the Fula conquests commenced, the Batta tribes were the most powerful of the Upper Benue, their country, at that time, extending up to Bornu and Baghirmi; now, however, they have merely a strip of territory on the banks of the river, and their power has dwindled away. Before we parted, we made great friends of these strange people, and they swore, by all their gods, that henceforth they would be the protectors of the white man whenever he passed through their country; and, undoubtedly, their hearts were light when, towards midnight, they bore off in triumph to their wives the numerous pieces of cotton stuff which were bestowed on them.

A run of a few hours brought us to the anchorage at Yola, the capital of the important Mahommedan state of Adamawa. We lay close under the left bank of the river, where a rugged range of low hills, covered with granite boulders and trees, obscures the view of the town. On the right bank the slopes of a magnificent group of mountains come almost down to the water, where, we decided, in the

[1] "The Batta language is intimately related to the Musgu language, which is itself related to the various dialects of Kotoko. All these languages have some general points of affinity to the South African languages."—*Barth.*

future the European traders would establish their sanatorium, some thousands of feet above the plain. Yola itself lies three miles or more from the anchorage, though, at this season of the year, the overflow from the river forms a huge lake, which extends to within a few hundred yards of the town, and which can be navigated by launches of light draught, and canoes. The relations between the Emir of Adamawa[1] and Europeans are what may be termed strained, the ruler being averse to the presence of white men in his country.

Dr. Barth, the first European who visited Yola, although he was received in audience by the then emir, Mahomed Lawal, was not permitted to remain in the town, and was forced to quit it within three days of his arrival. The next foreign visitors were the members of the Church Missionary Society's expedition of 1880, whom the Emir simply refused to see. The German explorer, Herr Flegel, was twice admitted into the presence of the Emir, but on the second occasion was peremptorily ordered to leave the town. In 1883 Mr. William Wallace, on behalf of the National African Company, was warmly received by the Emir, and bestowed on him many valuable presents, obtaining in return permission to trade in the town, as well as the lease of a piece of ground whereon to build a trading-station. In the following year, Mr. Wallace again visited Yola, and was received by the Emir, who, however, refused the proffered presents, thus showing that something had displeased him. Shortly afterwards, Mr. Dangerfield was sent up with the building materials for the factory, but, to his astonishment, the Emir refused to allow him to land them, and said he would only permit the Company to trade from a steamer. In consequence of this, in 1885 the hulk *Emily Waters* was towed up to Yola with a large stock of

[1] Omoru, son of Modibo.

goods. On arrival she was ordered away. The order, however, was impossible to carry out that season, since the water had fallen in the river, and, after much persuasion, the Emir gave his sanction for trade to be opened. Mr. Davenport and a native agent were left in charge, and commenced trading; but the Emir, by forming a blockade of canoes round the hulk, crippled their operations.

The Emir of Adamawa is a vassal of the Sultan of Sokotu, therefore the Company seized the opportunity of the visit of Mr. Joseph Thomson to the latter sovereign to obtain from him a letter enjoining his vassals to encourage trade with the white men. This document, in 1886, was conveyed to Yola, and read to the Emir, who, however, denied that it referred to him. Doubtless, on reflection, fearing the displeasure of Sokotu, he at last gave his consent to the re-opening of trade aboard the hulk, promising that, if all went well, the Company should be allowed to build on shore. The reason for his former displeasure he stated to be, that the Company's native agent, who had been left in charge at Yola during 1883 and 1884, had been caught intriguing with one of the ladies of the Court. In spite of his promises, the Emir suspended trade the day after the steamer, with the chief agent on board, left Yola. It was then thought useless to endeavour to open up the question again, and a trading steamer was despatched to Bubanjidda, at the head of the Benue. This venture, however, proved a failure, chiefly owing to the misconduct of the agents in charge.

In 1887 another letter was obtained from the Sultan of Sokotu, commanding the Emir of Adamawa to allow the Niger Company to trade in his country. He accordingly gave permission to the Company to bring their steamer down from Bubanjidda to the Ribago province, and further promised that he would see that it was not interfered with;

the Company in their turn agreeing to keep a European in charge. For a couple of years trade prospered at Ribago, but no further attempt was made to renew operations at Yola itself, as the Emir still showed himself to be far from friendly. In 1889, the German traveller, Dr. Zintgraff,[1] visited Yola, but was inhospitably received, and ordered to leave the town at once.

Thus we found events on our arrival; and the Commissioner, being desirous of having an interview with the haughty ruler of the country, sent messengers to try and arrange a meeting. The Emir, however, refused to see them, saying that he was too busy, but would send word about an audience in the morning.

During the forenoon we scoured the undulating country between the river and Yola with our guns, picking up a number of specimens of birds which we had not come across before. Guinea-fowls seemed plentiful, and once we started a large wild cat, but the latter beast got away with a whole skin. The day was intensely hot. The sun, beating down with its full force on the saturated ground, caused the air to be laden with a steaminess worthy of the hot-room of a Turkish bath, and it was not until we reaced the shade of a clump of *Adansonia* trees, on a plateau some 500 feet above the river, that we could breathe at all freely. Here a refreshing breeze, cooled as it crossed the lake below, gave us new strength, and we were glad of the excuse of admiring the view to make a somewhat lengthy halt. The view was well worth the toil we had gone through, and our first glimpse of Yola, visible two miles or more away, quite came

[1] This intrepid explorer left the Cameroons in December 1888, passed through the country of the Banyanga and Bali to Ibi, where he arrived in June 1889, and, having obtained provisions from the Royal Niger Company, proceeded by road to Yola; thence he returned, *via* Bakundi, to the Cameroons, which he reached at the end of 1889. In his journey he endured the greatest hardships, having frequent encounters with the natives. An interesting description of his journey has been published by the Geographical Society of Berlin.

up to our expectations. Isolated farms, surrounded by fields of corn,[1] and dark green plantations of yam, lie dotted about in the foreground; behind these again acres of high yellow millet stretch away up to the scattered grass huts of Adamawa's capital. The town itself covers a large area of land, but, owing to the numerous trees, is almost hidden from view. Groups of tiny dwellings are visible here and there, their pale straw roofs standing out against the brilliant green foliage, resembling, in the distance, beehives in an English garden. The few natives that we encountered seemed well pleased to see us, and eager to aid us in our search for birds. The difference between these Mahommedans and the pagan tribes we had lately been among is very marked, and we almost feel inclined to forgive the Fulas for their harsh treatment of the heathens.

Messengers arrived soon after sunrise, bringing word that the Emir did not wish to see any white people, unless bearing a fresh letter from the Sultan of Sokotu, which, of course, we had not got. However, the Commissioner determined to make another effort, and we went off to Yola in a little steam launch, getting within a quarter of a mile or so of the town by water. Our arrival in a steamboat so near the capital created no small amount of excitement among the people, who crowded down to the shore of the lake, and then round the launch itself, appearing to be greatly interested in everything connected with ourselves and our little vessel.

About a mile from the outskirts of Yola stands a small village known as the Arab quarter,[2] presided over by a person who bears no less a title than "King of the Arabs." This individual, though born in Yola, is said to be of Arab

[1] *Pennisetum typhoideum* and *Holcus sorghum*.

[2] This is a somewhat misleading name, as there are no true Arabs residing at Yola. Occasionally Arab caravans come down from the north, and these are billeted in the Arab quarter, as guests of the King of the Arabs.

descent. He is independent of the Emir, and is admitted to his friendship, and, consequently, has a certain amount of power. Through him, therefore, it was determined to seek an interview with the Emir.

Leaving the launch, accompanied by a Hausa interpreter,[1] I made my way to the dwelling of the Arab chief. As we entered the narrow doorway in the wall, which surrounds the chief's quarters, we found ourselves in a courtyard, in which stood eight or ten circular huts built of mud and thatched with grass. Indian corn and millet was growing in small patches between the huts, and numerous leafy trees shaded the whole enclosure. Outside his audience-hut the chief received me politely, taking me by the hand and leading me within, where he seated me on a lion's skin placed on the pebble-strewn floor, while he took up his position on another at a little distance in front, the interpreter standing on one side. Salutations, greetings, and compliments were freely exchanged, and then we commenced business. This, however, was far from satisfactory, for I saw at once that, although the quasi-Arab was said to be independent of the Emir, he is afraid to go against him in anything; and he proceeded to put me off in every way he could think of. The Emir, he said, was afraid to receive white people without the orders of his suzerain at Sokotu; the wuzeer was away, and therefore an interview was impossible; the Emir was unwell—and such-like petty excuses. The most I could get out of him was a promise that he would see the Emir and endeavour to persuade him to receive the Commissioner on his return down the Benue; and, that he might know that my man was no impostor, I left with him a Hausa translation (in Arabic character) of Major MacDonald's commission.

[1] Mr. John, a native lay missionary, long resident at Lokoja, and without doubt the finest Hausa scholar living.

On returning to the launch, I found it surrounded by a crowd of natives, standing up to their waists in water, and bartering everything they possessed in the way of ornaments or arms to the Commissioner, who had turned trader for the occasion, and was gradually getting together a huge pile of curiosities; saddles, swords, knives, necklaces, anklets, musical instruments, and sundry other things lay on the little deck, each eagerly parted with by its owner for a couple of yards of Manchester cotton stuff, or a plateful of salt.[1] Every one seemed merry and thoroughly pleased at our visit, and many were the inquiries as to when the Company intended to come and settle down at Yola to trade in earnest.

Above Yola the scenery of the Benue varies considerably. Sometimes the hills slope down to the very riverside, at others, a vast expanse of swamp, studded with large trees, stretches away as far as the eyes can follow it. A little further on the scene changes, and the "Mother of Water" flows[2] in majestic silence through black walls of mighty forest, above which, in the distance to the south, may be seen the tops of the mountains of Alantika, rising up several thousands of feet above everything.

Nine hours' steam against the current, after leaving the capital of Adamawa, brings us to the Faro river, which at first sight appears to be the principal stream; its width at the junction, at this time of year, exceeding that of the Benue, though it is far shallower, and cut up at its mouth with numerous small islands. It is said by native report to flow down from the south, though its course has not been as yet explored by Europeans. The Benue now narrows

[1] Salt is an expensive luxury to these Africans, and in remote places a little of it goes a long way.

[2] Dr. Barth says of the Benue, or, as he writes it, Benuwe: "The word belongs to the Batta language, where water is called *beé* or *bé*; but in kindred dialects it is called *bi*. *Nuwé* means 'the mother,' and the whole name means 'Mother of Water.'."

in to 300 yards, the banks being densely wooded; ever and anon small villages are passed with their little clearings for plantations, about which are seen countless numbers of bright-plumaged bee-eaters flitting in the sun, and now and then we try our skill with our rifles (though, I must own, with but trifling success), at the great white fish-eagles that sit like stone images on the branches overhanging the river. At dusk, the anchor chain running out, echoes again and again through the silent forests, and we lie for the night in sixteen fathoms of water, at a distance of nearly 900 miles from the sea,

We reached the town of Garua, in the province of Ribago,[1] about 11 A.M., off which lies the S.S. *Niger*, a trading steamer of the Company, under the care of Mr. Chaplin, a young agent lately out from England. This is the highest station of the Royal Niger Company, and the furthest point to which we meant to take the *Boussa*, so we anchored under the left bank, intending to give the old ship a rest while we made a voyage of discovery in the steam-launch *Benue*.

The province of Ribago fell into the hands of the Fulas, under one Bakari, some half century ago; prior to that it was inhabited by numerous pagan tribes, the principal amongst whom were the Battas and their offshoots, the Tengelin or Tangale; the former, being a large tribe occupying an extensive tract of country, simply betook themselves to another part of their kingdom, but the Tengelin[2] removed to the mountainous district north-east of

[1] Sometimes called Ribau or Ribawo, meaning "a governor's country seat."—*Barth*.

[2] The Tengelin grow sufficient corn for their own use, but spend their time principally in plundering the Fulas. They speak the Battawa language, and clothe themselves in a most primitive fashion. The men wear an apron made of strung cowries, hanging in front from the waist, while from the back the skin of a lion or other beast hangs loosely down to the calf of the leg. The women as a rule go naked, except for a piece of string round the waist, though a few are to be seen wearing aprons of Kuka bark.

Ribago, and have continued ever since to harass the Mahommedans on every possible occasion, attacking and plundering their caravans, and raiding right up to the walls of Garua. Shabana, the chief of this wild tribe, has immense weight with his people, who altogether probably do not exceed 1000 souls. Though few in numbers, they keep their Mahommedan foes in fear, being a regular hornet's nest among them. They live in strongholds in the mountains, and the Fulas have hitherto been altogether unsuccessful against them. The Emir of Yola, at the request of his vassal, the chief of Ribago, three years ago sent a large force to try and reduce them, but it was put to flight on reaching the hills, with a loss of forty men in the first engagement.

A short time before our arrival on the spot the Tengelin attacked an ivory caravan close to Ribago, killing thirty-five men and going off with forty-four asses laden with booty. The chief of Ribago, on hearing of this, immediately organised an expedition against them, and begged Mr. Chaplin to aid him by his presence, which alone, he said, would act as a spell against the savages, who had never even seen a white man, and would, in all probability, fly at the sight. The zealous young agent, imagining that he would gain favour in the eyes of the Emir of Yola, and thereby obtain for his Company the long-desired rights to build and trade in the country, and also doubtless thinking that his refusal to fight would be regarded as cowardice by the Mahommedans, a thing naturally hateful to an Englishman, threw in his lot with the people of Ribago, and joined the chief's camp at 5 P.M. The attack on the pagan stronghold commenced at once, and almost immediately the young Englishman was pierced by an arrow through the left thigh, which compelled him to retire. This unfortunate occurrence disheartened the Mahommedans to such an extent that they

were speedily repulsed with a loss of eleven men, thus leaving the Tengelin masters of the situation.

The chief of Ribago lives in his town, seven or eight miles from the river, but happened to be in Garua to-day transacting business. On the Commissioner sending to inform him that he would be glad to see him on board, the chief returned polite messages, saying that he was too unwell to pay a visit to the steamer, but would be very pleased to receive the white men on shore. Accordingly, in the afternoon, I became the bearer of complimentary speeches and presents to the invalid. Landing a little distance up the river, I was met by the chief's minister, and half-a-dozen armed warriors forming a mounted escort; a very respectable little horse, covered with Hausa trappings, was provided for me, and we went off gaily towards Garua, a distance of about three-quarters of a mile from the landing-place. As I neared the town, one or two horsemen came out to welcome me, their method of salutation being somewhat alarming at first. Charging down at a hand-gallop, they would rein up within a couple of yards of my horse's head, almost pulling their little beasts over backwards, at the same time raising their spears with the right hand high over the head, and shouting at the top of their voices, "Sannu, sannu Baturi"[1] (peace, white man).

The chief (or emir, as he is pleased to call himself) is a miserable old creature, and certainly looks as if he had a foot in the grave. He was lying on a low cot when I was ushered in, and appeared to be too feeble to move his long skinny legs off the couch, or offer his hand to me; however, after his attendants had shaken him up a bit, he became livelier, and talked more freely; and when the time came

[1] Baturi means really *red* man, the natives considering that Europeans are red; and, indeed, their faces *are* more red than white after a few months' exposure to the sun in these parts.

for me to go, and the interpreter mentioned that the presents were in the next courtyard, the old man was off his couch and after them as nimbly as possible. I am afraid he was a bit of a malingerer, for later in the evening I saw the aged gentleman, sitting tolerably upright in his high-peaked Bornu saddle, on his way to his home; but, as he "dashed" us two fat sheep, which made excellent "palm-oil chop," personally I forgave him everything.

Garua is a clean-looking town of small dimensions, and its inhabitants are an intelligent and pleasant people, spending their time, for the most part, peacefully in weaving, agriculture, and trade. They have several mallams, or priests, the chief of whom at present is Mallam Maigizo or Gizore,[1] who, from all accounts, is a well-informed and, for these countries, a well-read man.[2]

The country immediately round the town is flat, and subject, during the wet season, to be much flooded by the river. It is fairly well cultivated, and large herds of cattle, as well as some good-shaped little horses, are kept by the Fulas. Slavery, of course, exists, and in its worst form in this province. A yearly tribute of twenty or thirty slaves is sent by the chief of Ribago to the Emir of Yola, who, in his turn, sends a gang of several hundreds to the Sultan of Sokotu. The loss to these gangs during their journey across the Sudan is something enormous, as can well be imagined, considering that they are marched the whole distance by land in the dry season, and kept away from the river, from fear of being interfered with by the Niger

[1] *i.e.*, bald-headed.

[2] The following literary works are found among the Fulas of this province:—Adahawiya, Nisai, Baidi, Zada, and Bari. Their religious books, besides the Koran, are, Kadihu, Bisani, Kali, and Badari. Of course all writing is in the Arabic character, no tribe that I ever met with in West Africa having a character of its own. The languages spoken in Ribago are chiefly Hausa, Fula, and Kanuri, though, among the pagan tribes, there are many others, such as Battare (or Battanchi), Palli, and Palmawa.

Company. They often go for days without water, and any of them falling out by the way are either murdered or left to perish. In the cool of the evening we took our guns, and walked round Garua to look for something in the bird line, and were rather astonished, on coming round a corner, to see two old ostriches, which, of course, were tame ones, though they were bad-tempered enough, judging from the way they went after some children who were teasing them. Samson, the taxidermist, eyed these birds (probably the first he had ever seen) most critically, and remarked drily that they would take some time to skin. We got as many specimens as we wanted, in a very short time, amongst them some crested and other kinds of crane, a bird which I took to be the "Beefsteak" bird of India (*Ciconia leucocephala*), spur-winged plover, partridge, and snipe. We put up several of the latter, which struck us as being rather an odd thing so early in the year.

CHAPTER V.

THE KEBBI RIVER.

THE theories as to the course of the Benue sixty years ago, as I have already mentioned, were of the wildest description; for some time it was believed to be the main stream of the Niger, and as such to flow to the eastward, some said through Lake Tsad to the Nile, whilst others imagined that it eventually joined the Congo. The mistake in the direction of its course was rectified by Richard Lander, who found it flowing from east to west; and he it was who called it Tshadda or Chadda, having heard from the natives that it was an outlet of Lake Chad or Tsad. Allen and Oldfield continued to use this name, they also believing the Lake Tsad theory; MacGregor Laird, however, rejecting Chadda, adopted the name Shary, and refused to believe the word of the numerous natives whom he questioned as to the river rising in Lake Tsad. He says, "The natives are such inveterate liars, that no dependence can be placed on any accounts they may give," and he argues that "the water of the Shary is colder than that of the Niger; the rise of the river commences sooner and more suddenly than the Niger; there is little trade upon the Shary in comparison with the Niger, which, if it communicated with the sea of Sudan, would naturally be immense," and he further argues that the regular overflow of an inland sea could not cause a sudden rise of 50 or 60 feet in a river. Why he adopted the name Shary he does not say, this again must have been

from confused native report, since there is a large and distinct river of that name flowing into Lake Tsad, which was to some extent explored by Barth.

The officials of the Royal Niger Company have ascended the Benue until it becomes an unnavigable stream, flowing among the rocks of the Bubanjidda Mountains,[1] and Flegel, in 1882, camped near its source, in 7° 33′ N. About ten miles above Ribago (Garua) the Benue receives from the north-east a considerable stream, known as the Kebbi River, which, though about 250 yards wide at the junction, is not half the width of the Benue, and therefore cannot be held to be the main stream; native report, however, partially confirmed by Barth, considered that, by ascending the Kebbi, the Tuburi marshes would be reached, and in the wet season these marshes communicated with the river of Logon,[2] which in its turn flowed into the Shari, and then into Lake Tsad; hence, from native accounts, there was a direct waterway from the Benue to Lake Tsad. Barth does not quite confirm this, though he admits that it may be the case. He says, writing of the Tuburi marshes, "Dr. Vogel was struck by that large sheet of water which to him seemed to be an independent central lake, but which is, in reality, nothing but a widening of the upper part of the Kebbi. It is very probable that, from this place, there may be some other shallow watercourse, proceeding to join the large ngaljam of Demmo, so that there would exist a real bifurcation between the basin of the Niger and that of the Tsad. But even if this should not be the case, the breadth of the water-parting between these two basins at the utmost cannot exceed twenty miles, consisting of an entirely level flat."

The course of the Kebbi River from its junction with the

[1] About seventy miles above Garua.
[2] The Serbewuel. It rises about 7° 36′ N.

Benue to the Tuburi marshes was unexplored, and it was with the object of testing the practicability of navigating this stream that Major MacDonald determined to ascend it.

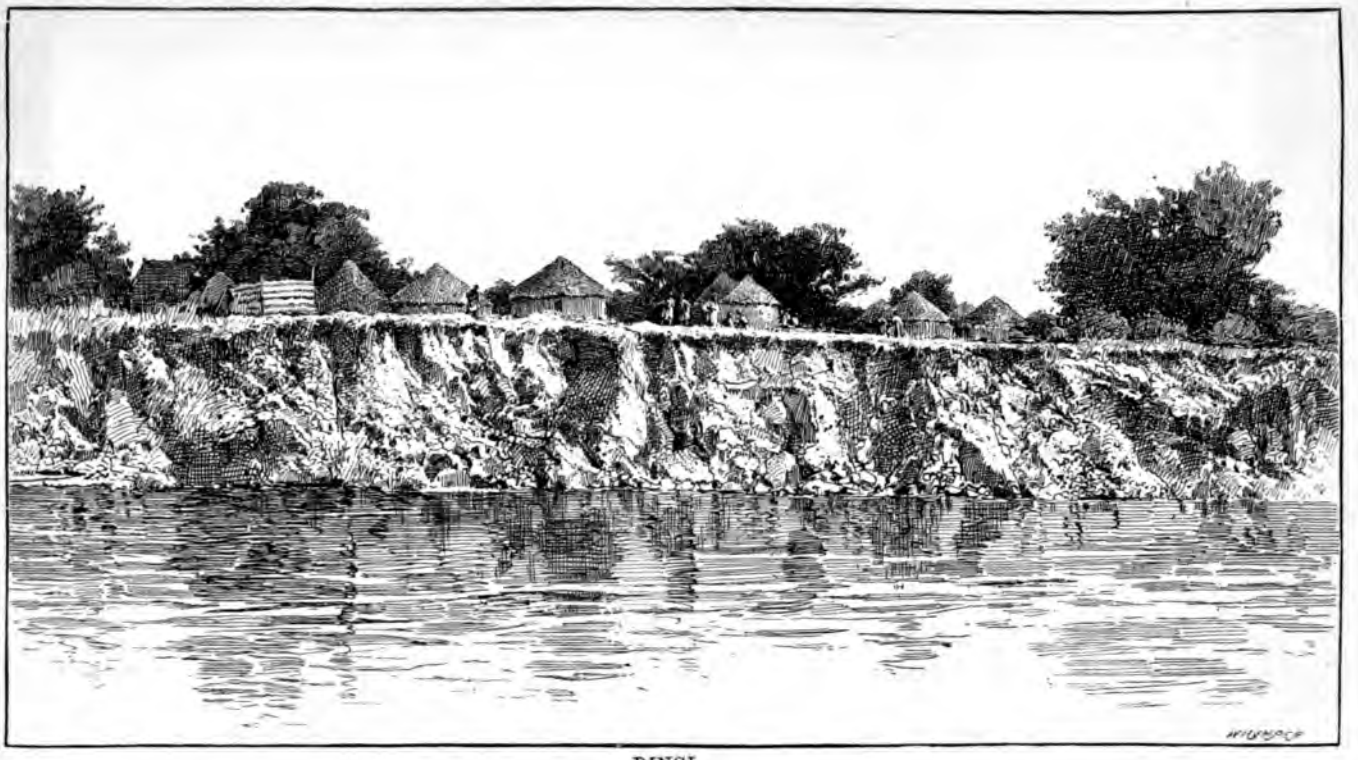
It was a great stroke of luck that we happened to have at this time attached to the *Boussa* (by way of tender) the *Benue*, a small stern-wheel steamer, specially built for navigating shallow streams; her length was about 60 feet, and, when fully loaded, she drew but 15 inches of water. She was a perfect little marvel, and, while we were at Yola, we tested her thoroughly, taking her when empty over marshes covered with less than a foot of water. Her engines were of the simplest construction, and two men and a boy could manage her easily, and make her do about ten knots an hour in slack water; she had only two drawbacks, the vibration caused by her engines, and, when burning wood, the showers of live embers which fell on her decks.

Shortly before noon, on the 21st August, we made a start for the mouth of the Kebbi, our party consisting of Major MacDonald, Mr. Wallace, and myself, with about twenty-five natives as interpreters, servants, and crew. Our little steamer was well stocked with coal and provisions for a week or ten days, as well as about £50 worth of Manchester stuffs and salt for purposes of trade and for presents; a Gardner gun stood on the upper deck, and there were a certain number of rifles on board in case of emergency; we had also in tow an English-built gig, so that we could get away, even if anything serious happened to our steamer.

Rain was falling heavily as we left the side of the *Boussa* and got into mid-stream; the river, now almost in full flood, stretches away inland on both sides, inundating the country far and wide. To our left hand, as we push our little craft against the current, the rugged mountains, which harbour the wild Tengelin, hide their black tops in banks of cloud; trees, with their lower boughs touching the water,

mark the proper limits of the river, and flocks of waterfowl, rejoicing in the season, fill the air with their cries. An hour later we have left the main river and entered on the unknown. I fancy most men feel a peculiar sensation on first setting foot in a country untrodden by their fellows—it is a feeling of excitement at the thoughts of something new—something which no one else has seen—though the feeling, I own, soon fades away. Our great regret on entering the Kebbi was that we were unprovided with scientific instruments, wherewith to lay down correctly the course of this unknown stream; and we had to make what use we could of our compasses to chart down roughly its windings.

To the south of the confluence of the Kebbi and Benue, and at a distance of six or seven miles, Mount Katie stands out boldly from one end of a low range of hills. Noticeable from afar, its wooded heights afford us, for many miles to come, the means of checking our survey work. On the right bank, for the first few miles, the country is well wooded, and, amongst the trees, an occasional village peeps forth, whose Mahommedan inhabitants reply with apparent goodwill to our shouted salutations, displaying few signs either of fear or astonishment at their first sight of white men. On the left bank, the country appears to be one great grassy swamp right up to the foot of Mount Katie, and lies extremely flat and low until the village of Dingi is reached. This village, which is similar in construction to those we have seen on the Benue, stands on a cliff some thirty feet above the water; cultivated fields surround it, and gigantic trees, scattered amongst which are a few palms, afford it shade. Behind Dingi the ground rises a little, and small farms, with their crops and cattle, appear at every turn of the river. The opposite bank now changes considerably, becoming more open; high grass



DINGI.

(with occasional trees), takes the place of the forest land, which is still visible a mile or so in the distance, extending, in one long unbroken line parallel to the river. A few miles above Dingi, and on the same bank, is the small village of Bé, and another four miles up stream, and on the opposite bank, Malum, north of which the country commences to become hilly. Nothing of particular interest occurred during the first day in the Kebbi, and at night we lay in a fathom and a half of water, a few yards from the right bank, away from any habitations, and sheltered from the wind by a low line of hills which sloped down almost to our anchorage. Our general course during the afternoon had been east, but for the last two hours tending northward.

At 6.30 A.M. we were under way again, the morning being cool and pleasant.[1] The country on both banks began to show signs of undulation, low lines of hills hemming in the river on either side. Passing the small village of Fumu, we stopped at Pamu a little higher up, at 8 A.M., and were immediately besieged by the villagers, who were eaten up with curiosity about our steamer and ourselves. Fula men, well armed, brought down their wives and children to see the strange sight, and we were soon on the most friendly terms with all. A few pieces of cotton-stuff, judiciously distributed, quickly gained their confidence, and, I believe, they were really sorry when we had to continue our journey.

The country about this part of the river seems well cultivated, and little farms are constantly met with; the people show intense excitement as we pass, and tear along the banks after our little boat. We landed during the day to get a shot at cranes or other birds, but we pressed on as fast as possible, eager to get into less civilised country.

[1] Thermometer 74°.

About mid-day, we passed the villages of Chau and Piské, on the right bank of the river, which now flows between low-lying wooded hills, heaped up with massive granite boulders.

For some time we had been going almost due north, and appeared to be heading towards a gap in a high range of mountains some ten or twelve miles away. No signs of life were visible after passing Piské, though occasionally we saw patches of cultivation in the distance. About 5 P.M. we passed on the right bank, the mouth of a swift running though narrow stream, which flows into the Kebbi from

THE KEBBI BELOW CHAU.

the north-west, and apparently from the gap through which we imagined our course lay; the stream was not more than ten yards wide, although the volume of water was considerable. We were much disappointed at finding that we were not to make a closer acquaintance with the high range on the right bank, whose precipitous and well-defined peaks, as far as we could judge, rose to a height of 2000 or 3000 feet above the plain. Through the gap we could see, in the far distance, the outline of another and a higher range; but all this land of mountains was not for *us*, for we were forced to follow the main stream, which was

now flowing down from the north-east. It had narrowed in to eighty yards, and rocks and small grassy islands were occasionally met with. On the left bank, the view was shut out by a succession of hillocks, bristling with trees and rocks, having a most picturesque effect in the light of the setting sun. For an instant the Pass of the Trossachs came into my mind, as I saw it once from a boat on Loch Achray, but the next moment the thought faded away—I was in Africa again—with hippos snorting fifty yards ahead. On rounding a point, we had disturbed a couple of these beasts just leaving the river for their nocturnal feeding grounds, but they were out of sight before we could get a shot. We anchored for the night, well away from the banks, as we had no idea what manner of man or beast might be about; and a rough night of it we had, the wind and rain doing their utmost to make us uncomfortable.

We had been rather drenched during the night, but the sun soon dries everything again in these latitudes, and we were far too interested in our journey to bother much about wet clothes. Immediately on leaving our anchorage, we turned almost due east, the river widening out and flowing in two narrow rocky channels round some islets covered with high corn. To the north, the lofty-peaked range still showed itself a mile or two away; to the north-east, the country lay perfectly level, and apparently much under water; on the south, or left bank, the scenery became suddenly and totally different to anything we had encountered before. Sloping steeply down to the river was a range of mountains, perhaps 1800 feet in height, the soil red, and covered with short and bright green grass, but no trees nor bushes of any kind were to be seen; the tops of the mountains were round in form, and numerous deep valleys, planted with millet, ran up at right angles to the river. Ascending the stream to the right of the islands,

we were soon made aware that the country was inhabited, for the hills echoed with a wild shout, and over the top of a knoll we descried a host of naked savages, swarming down the hillside towards the steamer, their spears glistening in the sun. Uncertain how we should be received, we brought to, and hailed the chief, our various interpreters trying each his own particular language until the right one was discovered. A friendly conversation took place, and the chief was induced to come on board, and told us that his people live behind the knoll on which we had first seen them, in the village of Katsho, and to them is intrusted the safety of the pagan tribes who inhabit the country between this and Lake Tsad; they are, in fact, the pagan outposts, and it is their duty to prevent the hated Fulas entering the land by way of the Kebbi. He seemed an intelligent man, and was evidently much interested in us, asking us why we had taken the trouble to come to his country. After some discussion, in which we proved to him that we were as much the friends of the pagans as of any one else, he told us we might proceed, which we did, after giving him a few strips of cotton, to the intense delight of himself and his people.

The uninhabited country, through which we had been passing yesterday afternoon, is evidently the neutral ground between the Mahommedan and pagan tribes, who appear to hold no intercourse with each other, unless it be that which is forced on the pagans by the Fula slave-raiders.

Continuing our course, and keeping close under the left bank, where the channel seemed deepest, we soon passed a small village, the houses of which were quadrangular and built entirely of red earth. As we steamed by, the natives, naked and wild-looking to a degree, were busy spearing fish, which seemed to be plentiful, and of a great size, judging by what we saw lying on the bank. Our advent,

of course, put an end to their occupation for the time, and they tore along the bank after us, shouting and waving their spears.

On our right the high grassy hills still sloped down to the water, whilst on the left everything was flat and swampy. Another mile brought us to a fine open expanse of water,[1] some three miles long by a mile and a half in width. Hippos were splashing about in the distance, and away to the north-east we could discern a town on the edge of the lake. Thinking that, in all probability, the channel would run by this town, we directed our course thither. We were, however, doomed to disappointment, for, on nearing the north-east edge of the lake, we found that it extended in a shallow swamp for some hundreds of yards towards the town, and the high rushes prevented our steamer's paddles working. A number of tiny canoes were seen amongst the reeds, their occupants apparently engaged in fishing; but they, one and all, made off as fast as possible on our appearance, and no amount of shouting would induce them to return. The town, which we could not approach, was of considerable size, and built of quadrangular mud huts, its name we afterwards discovered to be Bifara or Bipari. We were now fairly puzzled as to where the channel lay which brought down the water to this large lake. Skirting the north and east shores, we looked in vain for an opening in the high reedy grass and corn, and were almost inclined to believe that the Kebbi took its rise here, and that we had come to the end of all things. Noticing a large village on a promontory of the southern shore, we retraced our steps, and our arrival off the point was witnessed by hundreds of natives, who rushed down the slope from their huts with their spears in their hands. Being desirous of interviewing the chief, and discovering the whereabouts of the channel,

[1] Called by the natives Nabarat.

we sent the gig off, manned by Kru "boys." The natives, however, on seeing the boat approach the shore, entered the water, brandishing their spears above their heads and raising a wild shout, which somewhat disconcerted our Kru "boys," and caused them to turn back. We were now uncertain how to act, but an interpreter having entered the gig with some pieces of cloth, the crew were induced to paddle again towards the shore. The moment was an exciting one, and, in view of the hostile attitude of the natives, we directed the Gardner gun towards the village, though, fortunately, we had no occasion to use it. The interpreter, by means of a present of cloth to the foremost native, gained the friendship of the community; the spears were lowered, and one of the elders of the tribe was persuaded to come on board our little craft, and act as pilot, on the promise of a liberal present. The naked old savage was fairly shivering with fright as he crawled on deck, and he never relinquished his hold on a bundle of villainous-looking spears.

As we steamed away to the south-east under the old man's guidance, dozens of little canoes followed at a respectful distance, each holding two men, one paddling, while the other sat ready for action with spears in hand, evidently dreading treachery from their strange visitors. Keeping well under the high range of hills, we soon found ourselves leaving the lake and passing up a deep and winding channel, some twenty yards in width and flowing through banks thickly planted with dhurra.

After a mile or so of difficult navigation, we found it almost impossible to proceed, the length of the launch preventing our rounding the sharp bends of the stream. For some time we struggled on in hopes that a wider channel might be ahead, but we so constantly ran the bows of the little vessel on shore, and her rudder had suffered so much

from violent encounters with the bank, that we were fain to abandon our voyage in the steamer, and attempt to push on in the gig. Great was our disappointment then to find that this, our last resource, was useless, for our boat had become crushed beyond repair between the steamer and the banks. Our exploration, therefore, was at an end, which was a matter of great regret to us, the more so since our pilot assured us that, if we could go but a little further, we should reach broader and shallower water again, and be able to arrive at a large town called Lere, some twenty miles higher up the banks of the stream. We had forgotten, in the excitement of our advance, the difficulty we should experience in retiring if we did not get into open water, and now we found ourselves brought to a standstill in a stream whose width was not half the length of our steamer. I fancy the natives too saw our predicament, for they swarmed up in their canoes and surrounded us on land and water, jabbering and shouting to each other at the top of their voices. Our position was a nasty one; an accident to our little craft meant a disturbance with the natives, who were evidently intent on plunder. As to the result of a row, armed as we were, there was nothing to fear; but if we had to abandon the *Benue*, we should have to seize the natives' canoes, and to paddle oneself for fifty miles in a cranky little dug-out would be no joke. Mr. Wallace, however, with his usual coolness, grasped the situation at once, and let the steamer drift down, stern foremost, with the current, all hands standing ready with poles to shove off as she bumped against the banks, and, in a very short time, we were once again safe and sound in the lake.

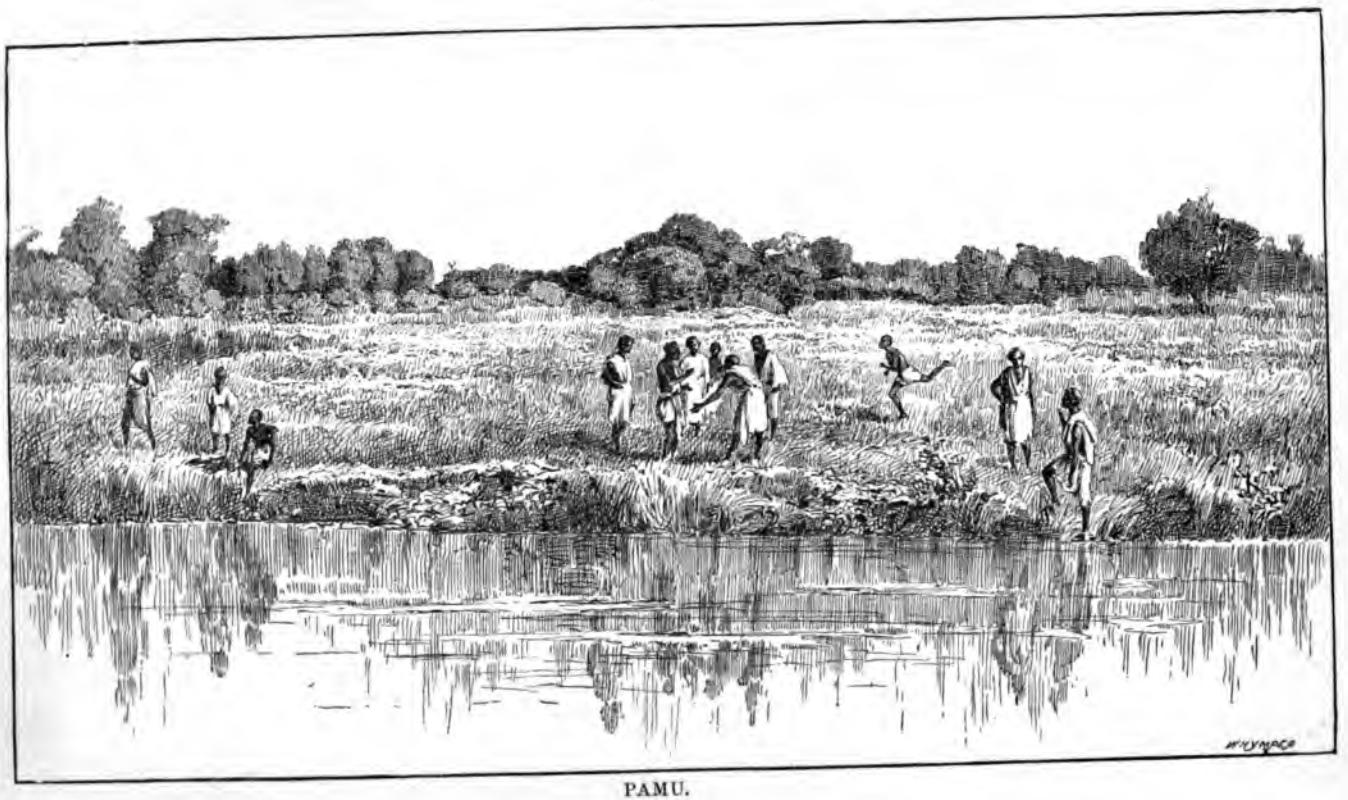
The volume of water in the channel, at the furthest point reached by us, was inconsiderable, and we were convinced, from what the natives told us, that the stream further on was of no great size. The river must now have been at its

highest level, and, in the dry season, could not be more than a trickling watercourse; so I fancy we were not far wrong in imagining that the distant mountains form the watershed between the basins of the Tsad and the Benue.

Kaku, the village of our pilot, turned out *en masse* to welcome the return of the hero who had braved a voyage in the white man's fire-canoe; and, on our anchoring off the landing-place, we were quickly surrounded by hundreds of inquisitive natives, who were able to wade out to us in the shallow water and subject us to the minutest inspection. Men and women were devoid of all clothing worthy of the name, though the former, as a rule, concealed "the insignia which mark the difference between the faithful and unfaithful" by a tight-fitting covering, or cap of neatly-plaited grass, the ladies wearing merely a string or two of beads and cowries.

The chief of the village, clothed in a dirty and ragged tobe, came on board with some reluctance, but soon settled down at his ease and conversed with us freely through the interpreters. He was a tall and well-built negro, though, judging by his face, I should say he possessed few good qualities. His little daughter accompanied him, adorned with a string of beads round the waist, and thick bracelets of cowries; at first she was greatly alarmed, shrieking with terror when she saw us, for possibly the white man had been held up to her as the only true "bogie-man;" however, she was soon pacified with a present of cloth, and sat down on deck to dry her eyes with the back of her hand. She seemed a gentle little child, which struck us as remarkable, considering the wild savages amongst whom she had been reared.

The natives were now assembled in great crowds round the steamer, some in canoes and some standing up to their knees in the water, all shouting and yelling with excitement,



PAMU.

whilst we were trying to draw information out of the chief, though hardly able to hear ourselves speak for the general uproar. Looking towards the bows of our steamer, I saw a native in a canoe suddenly snatch up our boat's flag, which was lying rolled up on deck, and, placing it under him, paddle off with great haste to the shore. We represented the matter at once to the chief, who shouted after the culprit, but he paid no attention, and disappeared among the huts, and probably now the Union Jack supplies clothing to half the village. This little incident showed us the nature of the gentlemen with whom we had to deal, and the amount of authority their chief has over them; and, noticing that the men appeared to be becoming somewhat insolent in their bearing, we asked the chief if he would like to go for a cruise on the lake, to which he assented, and thus we avoided the possibilities of coming to blows with the natives. After a while we took a friendly farewell of our visitors, and, having made them small presents of cloth, put them on shore and commenced our journey down stream.

The current was running two or three knots an hour, and we made no stoppage until we reached Pamu, at about five o'clock in the evening; here our old Fulbe friends came down to the bank to welcome us, and we decided to stay with them till morning. Nowhere in Africa had we encountered a more pleasing people, the women striking us as being particularly refined and scrupulously clean and neat in their becoming Mahommedan garb; their hair, dressed in the usual Fula fashion, was stuck over with long pins of carved ivory and copper, and a few little ornaments hung from their necks and arms; their features, though to European eyes plain, showed every trace of gentleness and intelligence, and their whole bearing was that of a civilised race, lacking only that reserve which native women generally assume in the presence of white men.

The desire of the people to obtain our Manchester cotton-stuff was great, and the remaining hours of daylight were spent in exchanging our goods for their arms and ornaments. The specialité of the place appeared to be calabashes, stained with red and yellow in various designs; neatly woven grass mats (which they use as plates) were also offered to us, as well as all the personal ornaments of the women. They estimated the value of our goods by colour rather than by material, a gaudy red stuff being the favourite, whilst a plain white was much valued by them, since they use it when torn in narrow strips as a currency.[1] The women conducted the business for the Pamus, our part of the bargaining being undertaken by the Commissioner; and, I must say, that a worse trader I have seldom seen, for the amount he gave for an article depended generally on the personal appearance of the lady with whom he was dealing, and had we stayed here long enough he would have squandered our substance, with nothing but a few hair-pins, to show for it.

The following morning we bade farewell to our Pamu friends, and, dropping quickly down stream, were once again alongside our floating-home the *Boussa*, at 11 A.M. Whether we had added anything to the geographical knowledge of these parts I know not, but, at any rate, we had had a pleasant trip, with just a spice of excitement about it; and, though our journey was cut short at perhaps the most interesting point, yet we pretty clearly established the fact that the Kebbi is practically useless as a route to Lake Tsad.[2]

[1] Called Léppi.

[2] The caravan routes from the Benue to Lake Tsad start from Ribago and Tepe, the usual time taken on the journey being ten to fifteen days. Doubtless the fertile country surrounding the great lake will in time be opened up to European commerce, but at present the people of Bornu have no desire to trade with white foreigners, hence any attempts to send expeditions into the country must result in failure.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RETURN DOWN THE BENUE.

THE Benue appeared now to be at its highest level, and, from what we could gather, would remain thus till the end of September.[1] Our journey down was rapid. Leaving Garua at 1 P.M., on the 24th August, the following morning we were at Yola, having anchored for the night at Tepe, the confluence of the Faro and the Benue.

We brought away with us from Garua the young Englishman who had been wounded by the Tengelin, in order to place him under proper medical care. His wound was still causing him great pain, possibly the result of the treatment which he had undergone at the hands of a native doctor. This worthy used to visit his patient every day, and, passing a piece of string through the hole in the wretched man's leg, would scrape the edges of the wound to prevent its festering, a method of cure which was not altogether pleasing to the wounded man.

We were now naturally somewhat anxious to find out in what sort of a mood the Emir was, and whether he meant to receive us. So an interpreter was despatched to see what the King of the Arabs had done for us during our absence. The same answer as before was brought back, the Emir would not have us at any price, because, as he said, we had brought with us no letter from Sokotu. The Commissioner now played his last card, and sent me off to try

[1] The average annual rise of the Benue is said to exceed sixty feet.

and see the Yerima, the Emir's eldest son, and endeavour to obtain through him an audience with his father.

The water had risen considerably since our last visit to Yola, and the ground all round the edge of the lake for some distance was ankle deep in water; therefore, I was carried ashore by a stalwart Kru "boy"—a mode of landing which did not add to my dignity in the eyes of the natives, who were now assembling in crowds round our little steamer. We entered the town almost immediately after setting foot on dry ground, and were soon lost in a labyrinth of narrow lanes and compounds, amongst which we might have wandered all day, but for the timely meeting with a friendly Fula lad, who consented to show us the road to the Yerima's abode. The soil on which Yola stands is sandy, and the place looks clean and neat. Groups of little conical huts, surrounded by fences of matting and shaded by spreading trees of many varieties, make up the town, which covers an area of possibly ten square miles. Occasionally larger compounds are met with, wherein plantations of sorghum and yam flourish among the little dwellings, the entrance to these enclosures being through a hut having two doors, which forms a kind of lodge or hall.[1]

Having proceeded along the winding lanes for half a mile or so, we crossed a stream of clear cool water running right through the centre of the town, and shortly afterwards found ourselves in the royal quarter. The residences of the Emir, the Yerima, and the Commander-in-Chief are surrounded by mud walls, some ten or twelve feet high, which effectually hide everything within from view; and, in front of the palace gateway (which is merely a large hut), is a fine open space, dotted with magnificent monkey-bread-fruit trees, under whose luxuriant shade the attendants of the court idle away most of their time.

[1] Záure or Segífa.

Arrived at the Yerima's house, we desired one of his slaves to announce us while we waited in the large entrance hut, the outer door of which was massively constructed of wood and iron. Here we remained a quarter of an hour, during which time the place rapidly filled with the men and boy attendants of the prince, who surrounded me and stared in open-mouthed wonder, passing remarks aloud, which, had I understood them, would probably not have improved my temper. One or two of these sight-seers appeared to be possessed of a fund of wit, judging from the amusement their remarks afforded the rest of the party, and I was not altogether sorry when the slave returned, bidding me follow him to his master. From the entrance hut, our guide conducted us, by a small courtyard, into another segifa, and thence, through a second courtyard, to the reception hut of the Yerima, where, on the pebbled floor, we found seated the prince and his brother, both dressed as Fula noblemen, and wearing the usual cloth across the face. I was not received with any great display of politeness, the Yerima not even deigning to rise or to offer his hand, but merely motioning me to be seated on a skin in front of him. This reception, however, was apparently not unfriendly, for I was no sooner settled than the princes commenced saluting me, making all the pretty speeches with which they were acquainted, and receiving in return a like number from my interpreter. The words *sannu* (peace) and *barkáh* (blessing) play a great part in these compliments,[1] and are repeated over and over again at short intervals. The whole process of saying "How d'ye do?" in this strange country takes at least a quarter of an hour, at the conclusion of which every one seems much better and able to commence business.

We got through all we had to say in a very short time, the prince promising that he would at once repair to the

[1] "The Fulbe of Ádamáwa are especially rich in compliments."—*Barth.*

palace, and explain to his father the importance of receiving the Queen's Commissioner; assuring me also, as I took my departure, that the Emir would send his messenger early in the morning to conduct me to the royal presence. I was not a little pleased with the result of my interview, though, I confess, I had certain misgivings, and a deluge of rain coming down on our way back to the lake, somewhat damped my ardour. The shores of the lake were alive with waterfowl of every description, and, amongst other things, we bagged some snipe, and a bird apparently identical with the nukhta, or comb duck, of India.[1]

Before leaving the place to return to the *Boussa*, we amused ourselves by turning on the steam-whistle of the little *Benue*, as a parting salute to Yola. We were at the time hemmed in by natives, who, standing up to their waists in water, were offering us their goods for sale. The effect of the first blast was electrical—old men, young maidens, fierce-looking warriors armed to the teeth, all gave one wild shriek and fled, overturning each other, and their calabashes of sugar-cane and other wares, in their haste to reach the shore. They saw the joke, however, after a while, and then taxed each other merrily with cowardice.

The morrow came, but no messenger from the Emir, so, at 11 A.M., our time being valuable, Major MacDonald gave the order to up anchor, and we recommenced our downward journey.

Thinking over the conduct of the Emir, I allow that his knowledge of Europeans and their ways, though slight, has

[1] *Sarcidiornis melanotus*, known also as the black-backed and knobbed goose. Unfortunately the specimens we got were afterwards destroyed by insects, but they were probably *S. africanus*, which is said to be slightly different from the Indian bird. We noticed that the wings of these birds were armed with spurs similar to, though considerably smaller than, those of the spur-winged goose.

been certainly unfortunate. Barth, the first white visitor to Yola, had brought down the wrath of the Emir, Mahomed Lawal, on his head, because he went there under the protection of Bornu, Adamawa's bitter enemy. Doubtless the present Emir had been warned against Europeans by his predecessors, and for many years had successfully resisted their overtures. At last, giving way, by pressure from his suzerain, he had admitted the Niger Company into his capital, with what result we have already seen. The whole affair has been a chapter of accidents from first to last, but I fancy that Omoru is obdurate, and, until his death, there will be little real trade with Yola. One cannot altogether blame the Emir, but, at the same time, it seems a pity that his subjects, who are all anxious to trade, should be prevented from doing so through his obstinacy.

On the morning of the 27th August we reached Lau,[1] where we spent most of the day loading our steamer with fuel. Heavy rain fell during the forenoon, much to the discomfiture of the natives wooding the boat. The wood-stacks on the bank seemed full of snakes of a dark-brown colour, with lighter markings, and about three feet in length, which the natives say are harmless. Hearing that we were interested in these reptiles, an old man and his wife appeared on board, bearing a huge grey snake, some seven feet long, and as thick as one's wrist, with a blunted tail. The

[1] Muri, the capital of the kingdom of the same name, lies about fifteen miles north-west of the Benue, and almost opposite Lau. It was formerly known as Hamaruwa, and was visited by Dr. Baikie during his expedition in 1854. Major MacDonald had intended going to Muri to see the Emir, but, owing to the excessive wet, he considered that the journey would occupy too much time; and, accordingly, on passing up the river, he sent a letter to the Emir, Mahomedu Ynah, saying that he would be pleased to see him at Lau on our way down. On our return to Lau we found the Emir's reply, couched in the politest terms, in which he said that he would at once repair to Lau on being apprised of the Commissioner's arrival. It was, however, impossible to wait for him, since he could not well be down under three or four days.

snake was a pet, and the owner refused to part with it at any price, saying that he made his living by exhibiting it. He went through the usual performances of Oriental snake-charmers, the beast raising itself, puffing its head out like a cobra, and striking at its master's hand. We offered it a fowl, but it had eaten a fortnight before, and was not hungry.

In the afternoon we dropped down the river in a surf-boat in search of birds, being picked up later by the *Boussa*. The river was much swollen, and our boat was able to penetrate some distance inland. We came on colonies of the little yellow weaver-birds, with their quaint nests hanging from the mimosa bushes over the water, some with eggs, and some with young; golden-looking bats, disturbed by our presence, flitted from branch to branch, and now and then a spur-winged goose, flying overhead, offered us a tempting shot.

At mid-day on the following day we were on board the *Benue* again, and, leaving the main river, entered the Tarabba River, on a visit to the important town of Bakundi.[1]

This river, which flows in a north-westerly direction, discharges itself into the Benue, through three or four mouths, the principal channel is, perhaps, not more than 150 yards wide, but above the delta (if such it may be called), the river opens out to almost three times that width, narrowing again higher up. The scenery, as we ascend, is uninteresting, and nothing is visible on either bank beyond the fringe of high reedy grass.

Coming to a straight part of the river, we saw an antelope swimming across some 200 or 300 yards in front of us, but, in spite of our struggles against the current, he disappeared into the grass, showing himself again, however, to

[1] The town is about thirty-five miles from the river's mouth.

our astonishment a little higher up, and within ten yards of the boat. Wallace was nearest to the rifles, and, snatching up one, shot the beast through the neck. It turned out to be a fine old water-buck, and provided a good many meals for ourselves and our crew. There was little other excitement during the day, though we collected a number of large birds of the crane tribe for our taxidermist to occupy himself with.

A few small villages are passed on both banks of the river, and, towards dusk, the larger village of Sindridri,[1] on the left bank, where the Royal Niger Company have erected a large iron store-shed, as a kind of depôt for Bakundi. Shortly after dark we reached Gassol, on the right bank, where we made fast for the night; the town is some little distance from the river, and it was too late to expect a visit from the chief,[2] who, however, sent down a sheep as a present of welcome. The people are Fulas, and subjects of the Emir of Muri.

The evening was delightfully cool, and, for the first time in this part of Africa, we sat round a camp fire on shore, until late into the night, the Major regaling us with some of his choicest and most blood-curdling stories.

The next day we steamed steadily up stream, through low-lying and uninhabited country, nothing occurring to break the monotony of the journey, except an attack on our boat by a snake, some three feet in length, which swam off from the shore, and made a most desperate attempt to get on board, being only stopped by a charge of shot. It was a handsome dark-brown beast, with light-coloured chain markings and flat diamond-shaped head. About sunset we passed the Albemarle Mountains, which

[1] Flegel's Sendirde.

[2] This chief claims to be independent, though he pays complimentary tribute to Muri.

slope down to the river on the right bank, and another range a little higher up on the left bank. The sides of these mountains are well wooded, and their summits, precipitous and rugged, stand out against the sky-line like a series of old ruined castles.

It was not until long after dark that we reached the anchorage of Bakundi, where we were met by the agent of the Niger Company, a native of Sierra Leone, bringing us the unwelcome news that the Emir of Bakundi was away with his troops,[1] punishing some pagan tribes who had been harassing the ivory caravans.

Rain fell heavily during the early hours of the morning, ceasing, however, about 10 A.M., when we got our first glimpse of Mount Beli or Bali, some twenty-five miles to the south-east, rising abruptly from the plain to a height apparently of 3000 or 4000 feet.[2] This isolated mountain is situated on the borders of the Bakundi territory, and is a perpetual thorn in the side of the Emir, being the stronghold of the pagan tribes. Bakundi, the capital of the Emir Baruba's dominions, lies about half a mile from the river, and is approached in the wet season by a stream navigable only for canoes. It is a large and scattered town, similar in construction to Yola, and is said to contain 5000 inhabitants. The Emir's house stands in the centre of the town, and is surrounded by a double fence, the outer one of grass matting, the inner of mud, the entrance being by a high mud gateway. Opposite the gateway, and on the far side of an open space, is the market—a collection of grass sheds at the meeting of half-a-dozen roads—where we found numbers of women selling grain, ground-nuts, and other articles of food. There were few men about the place,

[1] Bakundi is said to be able to muster 200 horsemen and 1200 infantry, all very irregular and badly armed.

[2] Flegel, who was there, says 750 mètres = 2500 feet.

since most of the male population had accompanied their sovereign on his expedition against the pagans.

The Niger Company's trading-station is built on the edge of the town, and between it and the river. It was at one time in a much more flourishing condition than at present, the cause of the decline in trade being that the ivory which formerly came here now goes to Kàno (some 300 miles north of the Benue), where the merchants are able to obtain a better price for it.

The ivory trade of this quarter of Africa is mostly in the hands of Hausa merchants, and the method of carrying it on is rather interesting to follow. The bulk of the ivory exported from the Niger Territories comes originally from the Adamawa province,[1] *i.e.*, that part of the country which lies between the Benue and the Cameroons. The Hausa traders make their purchases from the hunters at the big ivory markets of Banyo and Ngaundere, and thence proceed by the caravan route to Kano. At Kano, the ivory is exchanged for country-made cloth, tobes, and such like articles, and a proportion of it then goes to Egga on the Middle Niger, where it is exchanged again with the Niger Company for salt. The traders who have brought the ivory from Kano, get an order for their salt on the Company's factory at Shonga, the starting-point for Ilorin, in Yoruba, thereby saving canoeage from Egga to Shonga. At Ilorin they obtain an immense price for their salt, in country-cloth and tobes, which they take back to Kano, celebrated throughout the Sudan as a cloth market.

A glance at the map will show that this is a very roundabout way of doing business, for, if we draw a straight line between the original purchase-place of the ivory and the

[1] A little ivory is brought down from the Middle Niger above Boussa; the tusks are heavy, and almost invariably broken off or worn down at the ends, which the natives ascribe to the elephants inhabiting rocky districts.

place of its final sale, we find that Kano lies at least 400 miles north of that line, and the ivory is taken to Kano because the merchants can obtain only there the articles they require. When the Niger Company first established its trading-stations on the upper parts of the Benue, the Hausa merchants brought in their ivory and exchanged it for Manchester goods,[1] but they soon discovered that such goods had not a ready sale among the natives, who were wedded to the cloth of the country, and therefore they ceased to trade to any great extent with the Company. To the uninitiated in trade problems, the obvious remedy would seem to be for the Niger Company to stock their Benue stations with such goods as the ivory merchants require.

Twenty years ago, Baruba was Emir of Muri, but, having incurred the displeasure of his suzerain at Sokotu, the latter deposed him and put his younger brother Mahomedu Ynah, on the throne. Baruba then gathered together all his slaves and followers and went to Bakundi, where he founded a town, and conquered, or rather partially subdued, the neighbouring pagan tribes, establishing himself as emir of the province of Bakundi, and being then more or less received back into the favour of the Sultan of Sokotu. A few years since, Ynah, in his turn, offended, and the Sultan of Sokotu, wishing to reinstate Baruba as Emir of Muri, summoned him to repair to Sokotu. Baruba, however, declined, saying that, having been wrongly deposed, he refused to be at the beck and call of Sokotu. The Sultan thereupon ordered Ynah to appear before him at his capital, so that he might publicly reprimand him; but Ynah openly defied him, knowing well that the distance was too great

[1] Ten years ago the Company's agents were purchasing ivory at £200 per ton, now they pay £500 or £600, and even at this price they cannot obtain the amount they formerly did.

for him to suffer at the hands of the suzerain, and, if the worst came to the worst, he could claim the protection of the Royal Niger Company, with whom he had contracted an offensive and defensive alliance.

Matters remained in this state until the autumn of 1888, when Ynah sent an expedition to subdue the turbulent pagan chief of Zhibu, a town at the mouth of the Donga River. This was represented to the Sultan of Sokotu as a wanton act of oppression, and he accordingly determined to depose Ynah, for which purpose he despatched his envoy, Bukari Dangala Galladima,[1] to Bakundi to induce Baruba to return to the Muri kingdom; and, whilst we were in the town, we were fortunate enough to meet this gentleman.

After we had returned to our steamer, the Sokotu envoy came to pay an official visit to the Commissioner, accompanied by a large retinue, all of whom, however, our little boat was unable to accommodate.

Bukari was a fine specimen of a Fula, dignified in his bearing and imposing-looking, being over six feet in height and stout. He was clothed in voluminous and costly tobes, having his features concealed according to the tantalising custom of these Mahommedans. I know nothing more irritating than to hold an animated conversation, possibly on important matters, with an individual, when one sees only his eyes; it is a thing which, without experiencing, one can scarcely understand. Personally, I consider the face-cloth in matters diplomatic (*cæteris paribus*), as a handicap of sixty points in a hundred.

The envoy seemed well pleased to meet the Commissioner, saying he had never before met a duly-accredited messenger of the Great Queen. He discussed fully the affairs of Muri and Bakundi, and said that, on Baruba's return from his expedition, he hoped to persuade him to assume the sove-

[1] Galladima is a title signifying governor.

reignty of Muri in addition to his present kingdom.[1] On taking his departure, he asked to be allowed to shake hands, tendering us many compliments on behalf of his master at Sokotu and himself. Leaving Bakundi at 2 P.M., and coming down under full steam, we reached the *Boussa* in the main river at 9 P.M., having had three hours of darkness and violent storm to battle against. Our big ship's lights were welcome beacons indeed, for it is far from amusing to have to encounter a tornado in our little top-heavy craft.

With the first streak of dawn we were under way, and, by 8 A.M., were anchored off the mouth of the Wukari or Donga River, making ready for another small excursion. The land in the angle formed by the Wukari River with the Benue is low and swampy, a few large trees being scattered about amongst the high grass. Seeing some crested cranes settle down on the tops of a clump of trees, I got out the gig, and was paddled ashore, where I found that walking was anything but pleasant, the water being almost up to my knees and the grass waist-high and difficult to get through. In time I reached the trees, and bagged a brace of handsome birds as they sailed away from their resting-place. The country was alive with water-fowl of all kinds, from snipe to geese, but the steam produced by the hot sun on the swamp made the slightest exertion unbearable. As I was wading through deep water to pick up a dead bird, suddenly I felt a sharp nip on the inside of my thigh, just at the water-line. I thought no more of it at the time, as I saw nothing

[1] Mr. Charles M'Intosh, a reliable authority on Benue affairs, does not put much faith in Bukari, and thinks that his mission will fail, since the brothers, Baruba and Ynah, are sure to play into one another's hands. He, moreover, throws great doubt on the cohesion of the Sultanate of Sokotu, in that he considers it very doubtful whether any of the emirs would send a contingent to the aid of Sokotu if at war, unless a religious war; neither does he deem it at all likely that the Sultan would assist his vassals. The Emir of Muri Mr. M'Intosh holds in high esteem.

in the water, and imagined that I had run against a thorn or something of the sort; but, on changing my wet things afterwards, I found a copper-coloured mark on my skin, about the size of a sixpence, and a reddish stain on the white flannels that I was wearing. I fancy I must have been stung or bitten by something venomous, but by what, I was unable to discover.[1] At 11.30 A.M. we were away in the little *Benue* up the Donga River, a fine stream some 300 yards wide, with a deep channel at this season of the year, though after November unnavigable for anything but canoes. The scenery on the banks is tame—scrub and grass, flooded for some hundreds of yards by the river, with a belt of dense forest land in the distance, is the only thing seen for hours. One solitary grass-hutted village—Yokola—is passed, and, at 4 P.M., we reached the junction of the Sontai or Bantaji River,[2] which joins the Donga from the south-east.

Close by the spot where the two rivers meet, and a short distance from the left bank of the Donga, a solitary conical hill, covered with boulders and trees, rises about 600 feet above the surrounding country. This is known as the "Mother of Mountains," and is considered by the pagan Jukos as a most sacred place, though for what reason I was unable to learn.[3]

The Major, Wallace, and myself, landed on the left bank at 4.30, with half-a-dozen Kru "boys," to try our luck with our rifles for an hour or two. For a quarter of a mile inland from the river the grass grew eight or nine feet high, and then commenced a magnificent park-like country, where we hoped to find game. We formed line facing the sun,

[1] The mark on my leg remained for some days, and at times was irritable; the stain on the flannels proved as indelible as Bond's marking-ink.

[2] Bantaji and Sontai are both important towns on this river, the former almost at the junction with the Donga, the latter some fifty miles higher up.

[3] Flegel calls this hill Matarfada, the coronation hill of the Jukos.

so as to be more certain of our direction, and moved slowly forward within sight of each other. Occasionally we saw a doe antelope, but no bucks, and soon we found ourselves in a forest resembling more an English wood than a tropical jungle. The grass at our feet was short and springy, and the only sign of Africa was the immense number of huge mounds formed by white ants. Intent on looking for game, I wandered away to the flank, and, a little later, found myself alone in the forest. I shouted to my companions, but received no reply; so I commenced retracing my steps towards where I thought they must be. Seeing, however, no traces of them, and noticing that the sun was fast sinking below the trees, I turned my back towards it and made for the river. In time I reached the high grass, which, I knew, bordered the stream, but I could see no landmark to guide me to the steamer. I tried to push my way through the grass to the water's edge, but I only got into a deep swamp. I now began to feel creepy, and thought how unpleasant it would be to get lost in a country where I could not see a yard ahead, and where, at any moment, I might stumble on some village inhabited by savages. I had not the slightest idea where I was. I might be three or four miles above or below our landing-place for all I knew. I climbed a tree, but still could see nothing. I then fired a shot, and, to my intense relief, was answered by the steamer's whistle not half a mile away, and it did not take me long to get on board. To the reader this little incident may seem trifling, but I thought it no joke at the time, and I determined in the future never to lose sight of my companions, when shooting in the African bush. None of the party had had any sport, though quantities of does and any number of guinea-fowl were met with.

We continued our journey up the river for a couple of hours by moonlight, and then anchored, spending a moist

night owing to the continuous rain driving in under the awning.

Our course next morning lay through dense forest-land, flooded by the river on both sides, and, after ascending for some hours, the stream widened and passed in two channels round a wooded island. As we approached the latter, we were astonished to see an elephant, 200 yards ahead of us, swimming across from the island, where he had evidently been feeding, to the mainland. We appealed to the stokers to drive us along in hopes of getting a shot before the great beast landed, and for a time we thought we should succeed, since the water was up to the lower boughs of the trees on the bank, thus preventing the elephant from landing. We were, however, doomed to disappointment, for he found a passage between two trees, and got the start of us on *terra firma* by five or ten minutes. We followed his footprints through the forest for some distance, but finally abandoned the chase, as he was evidently going too hard for us to get up with him.

At 2 P.M. we reached Donga, a Juko town, containing between 4000 and 5000 pagan inhabitants, ruled over by King Billai. The factory of the Niger Company stands close to the river, and outside the wall of the town. Trade has been established here for some years, but is far from prosperous, being chiefly confined to rubber and gutta-percha.

Donga is partially fortified, in that it is surrounded by a small ditch and low mud wall. These defences were constructed by the present king's father, who is said to have been a most warlike individual, managing to maintain his independence though suffering defeat at the hands of the Fulas on more than one occasion. Billai now professes Mahommedanism, and dresses as a follower of the Prophet; but, if report be true, he is still at heart a pagan, and

believes in all the heathen superstitions and fetishes. To the Commissioner's invitation to a palaver, the king replied that he was afraid to go on board a steamer, but would be glad to welcome us to his house in the town. I was, therefore, deputed to visit him with Mr. John, and was received most cordially. The King assured me, during the interview, that his subjects were exceedingly well disposed towards Europeans, and that they all considered the presence of the Niger Company most beneficial to the country. He regretted that, owing to his poverty, he was unable to send the Commissioner a valuable present in return for that given to him, but he made a peace-offering to the White Queen's messenger of a jar of honey and some honey cakes.

The remainder of our time at Donga was spent in collecting a few curiosities of the country, amongst which were some brass tobacco pipes, and three new musical instruments,[1] and, leaving the place at 5 P.M., we steamed down the river at about nine miles an hour, and reached the *Boussa* lying off the town of Zhibu at 11.30 the same night.

The chief of Zhibu is nominally the vassal of the Emir of Muri, and for years has given endless trouble. As far back as 1854, Dr. Baikie, the first European to visit Zhibu, was treated most discourteously by the chief, and, thirty years later, the agents of the Niger Company, who were the next white men who had dealings with Zhibu, came to loggerheads with the people, the result of which was that the town was bombarded, and taken after a desperate struggle, in which the Zhibus proved their bravery by their determined resistance. Seventeen of the Company's force were wounded by poisoned arrows and spears, but, owing to their being

[1] An exhaustive paper on the musical instruments and notes, collected during our visit to the Niger Territories, has been prepared by Captain C. R. Day, author of "The Music and Musical Instruments of Southern India and the Deccan," and will be found in chapter xiii.

provided with an antidote for the poison, only one case resulted in death. Wallace's servant (who is with us on board the *Boussa*) was one of the first over the wall which surrounds the town, being close on the heels of his master, ever foremost in the fray. He received a spear through the cheek, and is horribly scarred to this day. Notwithstanding this lesson, the chief of Zhibu soon gave trouble again, plundering caravans, and insulting his master, the Emir of Muri. The latter ruler, unable to pass over the conduct of his vassal, invoked the aid of the Niger Company, and, on the 31st August 1888, the S.S. *Kano* and *Sokotu* shelled the town, driving the inhabitants into the bush. The chief was deposed, and permitted to go and live in retirement at Bantaji, a new man being appointed his successor by the Emir of Muri.

Three hours' steaming in a thick mist brought us to Ibi, where we dropped the wounded man, Chaplin, and continued our way, anchoring off Kanzu, in the Mitshi country, at night. The following morning we reached the small trading-station of Abinsi, situated on an island a few miles west of the mouth of the Katsena River. The town is surrounded by a mud wall, and, although inhabited by Jukos, it is entirely cut off from Juko territory by the Mitshis, who are perpetually harassing the place. The only business done here by the Royal Niger Company is in benni seed, which is brought in by a few friendly Mitshis, the people of Abinsi being agriculturists and fishermen.

After interviewing the chief and his head men, we went on down the river, passing the Juko towns of Akpah and Illah, and, an hour later, came to Upper Ojogo, a small village on the left bank, where the inhabitants at first seemed greatly alarmed by our arrival, but, on our departure, they accompanied us in their canoes for some dis-

tance in a most friendly manner, standing up, and using their long paddles with much skill.

Upper Ojogo is a village of the Aragos, a pagan tribe, whose country is mostly on the right bank of the river, and bounded on the north by the Bautshis and on the west by the Kaffis. The Arago capital is Doma, some twenty miles north of the river, and the other places of importance are Akpofo, Otiya, Zuwo, Ayelli, and Ojogo, on the right bank, most of which places we visited, holding palavers with the head men. At Ojogo, we met the old chief Akuja, who rules over the Arago riverside towns, and we had an interesting interview with him. He came on board the *Boussa* with a retinue of unwashed followers, and held forth at some length on the importance to his country of regular trade, but the subject which seemed most pleasing to him was fishing—at which apparently he is an adept—and, before leaving, he begged the Commissioner to send him some good hooks from England.[1]

As the party filed out of our saloon, I looked back from the doorway where I was standing, and witnessed one of the most amusing sights imaginable. At the end of the saloon is a large looking-glass, which, during the palaver, had escaped the notice of the natives, since they were seated on the floor beneath it; now, however, I saw an old courtier standing in front of it and looking at himself in blank astonishment. I kept quiet and watched him for some minutes, while he made the most awful faces at himself, then felt the different features of his face to see if it was really himself that he was regarding, then shrieked with delight at his own ugly face, repeating the operation over and over again; at last I could stand it no longer, and burst into loud laughter, at which the poor old man turned round and

[1] On our return to England a large box of fish-hooks was despatched to this African disciple of Isaak Walton.

bolted past me through the door, evidently thinking that the place was bewitched. I had heard stories of natives seeing themselves in a glass for the first time, but I never thought it would be half as funny as this. During the afternoon we had our first real taste of a tornado—what we had encountered before were mere pygmies—light clouds appeared on the horizon to the north and south, gradually becoming thicker and darker, then rising, seemed to close inwards towards the east, meeting in one black mass which came down on us like a thunderbolt. The river, hitherto calm as a mill-pond, suddenly became an angry sea, and a hurricane swept down, driving us before it and making every timber in the old boat fairly shiver. For ten minutes the wind blew with unabated force, and then the black clouds above us gave forth a deluge and the wind dropped. In half-an-hour the storm had passed, and the sun shone forth again to aid us in drying our goods and chattels. Towards nightfall we stopped at Otiya and interviewed King Apapuke,[1] a most worthy pagan, whose sole care seemed to be to preserve the piece of paper on which was written his treaty with the Niger Company, keeping it wrapped in many strips of cloth, which would perhaps have been better utilised had they been formed into a covering for his body.

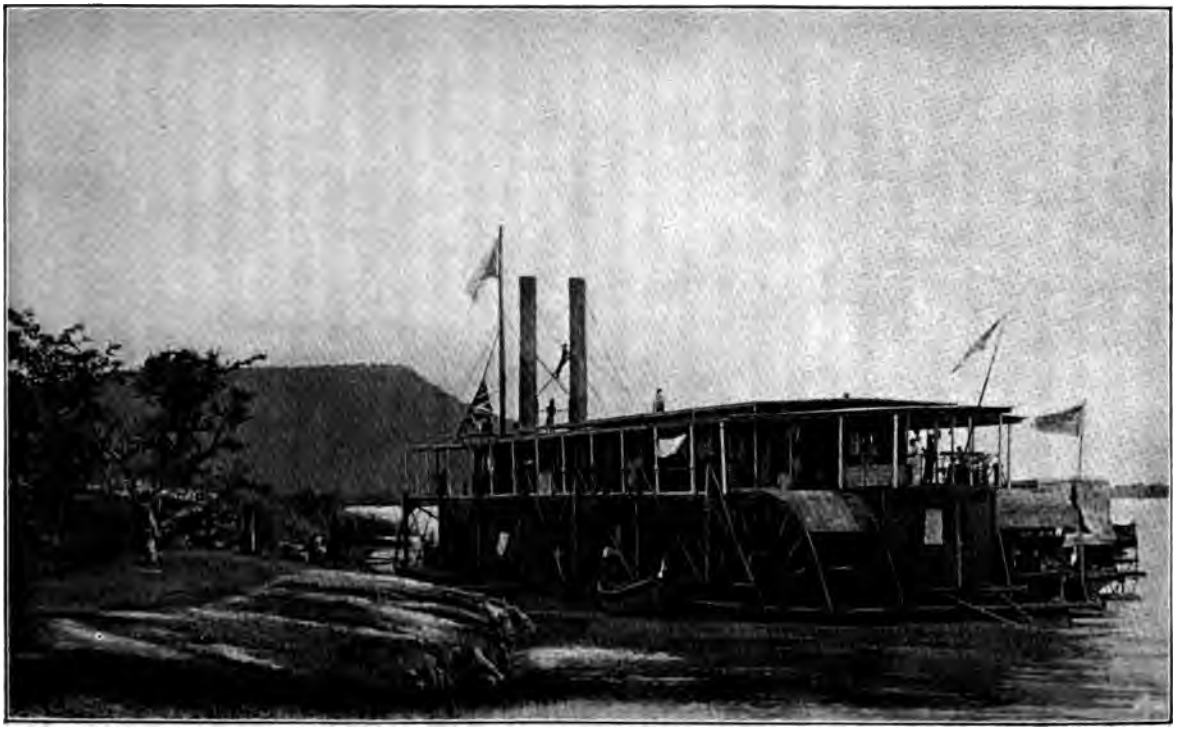
Early in the morning we visited the Arago village of Akpofo, whose chief complained bitterly of the conduct of the Mahommedans of Kaffi, who raid them for slaves regularly every dry season. At one time the people of Akpofo dwelt on an island, but recently they have removed to the mainland and built their village in the midst of thick bush, hoping thereby to be better able to resist the attacks of their enemies. The Kaffis (like their neighbours of Nassarawa) live solely by raiding the pagans; their capital, Kaffi, lies some sixty miles north of the Benue,

[1] Successor to King Ogo.

and their chief port is Odeni[1] where we stopped later in the morning. The town, which is picturesquely situated between the river and a low range of hills, is of considerable size and surrounded by a high wall; at intervals, along this wall, on the land side, small huts are erected on poles to serve as watch-towers, from which it would appear that the inhabitants fear attack from the direction of the hills. Each year, after the river has subsided, the Emir of Kaffi comes down to this port and starts on his slaving expeditions to the south, establishing his war-camps at Agbebi and Adibo, pagan villages which have tendered their submission to the Emir. The Agatu villages of Kokoro, Okopo, Adana, and Opoko, on the left bank of the Benue, still hold out against their Moslem foes, and in consequence suffer considerably. We spent the rest of the day and night at Loko, where we were graciously received by the Emir of Nassarawa. Our last day in the Benue was passed in visiting three villages —Amaran, Mozum, and Gande.

Amaran, as seen from the river, has a most striking appearance, and I was fortunate in being able to take some good photographs of it during our stoppage. On the edge of the water stands a giant bombax tree, holding its head in lofty pride far above the surrounding vegetation, smaller trees in clumps spread themselves amongst the little yellow grass huts of the village, and plantations of corn and cassava make the place look bright and green. The chief, a man of about forty, appeared to be a dirty and ill-conditioned individual, and his people (who are Igbiras) a naked and uncivilised crew. Our interview with his majesty was short, but we learned that he had been subjugated by the Emir of

[1] At one time the French Roman Catholic missionaries established a station at Odeni, but soon abandoned it, finding that they were unable to make any impression on the Mahommedans; the Niger Company have a factory here, but trade is by no means brisk, consisting at present merely of rubber and gutta-percha.



SS. "BOUSSA" AND "BENUE" OFF LOKOJA.

Nassarawa, whom he acknowledges as his master, and that his territory stretches back five days' journey inland from the river, and is there bounded by the countries of the Basas and Opotos.

At Mozum we received another visit from our old friend the chief, and at sundown came in sight of the confluence, stopping at Gandé[1] on the left bank, to see the head man. The palaver was interesting, as showing the character of these people. The Commissioner asked the chief if he had received his annual subsidy from the Royal Niger Company, to which he replied in the negative, being backed up in his answer by his attendants; on inquiry, however, it was proved that he had been paid everything in full, and Major MacDonald taxed him with having told a lie, at which he and his worthy courtiers smiled blandly, evidently thinking they had done rather a smart thing.

Shortly after dark we left the Benue and reached our old moorings at Lokoja, where we found a budget of letters from home—the first we had received since leaving England.

[1] The inhabitants of Gandé are Igáras, though amongst them are found many refugees from Nupe.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TRIBES OF THE CONFUENCE AND MIDDLE NIGER.

In the angle formed by the rivers Benue and Kworra, and on the right bank of the Lower Niger, there dwelt, at the beginning of this century, a powerful pagan tribe named Igbira, whose history has been almost entirely overlooked by travellers. The tribe has now been more or less scattered to the winds by the ever-aggressive Fulas, and, at the present time, their towns and villages lie far apart, though always near the rivers. Their population probably does not exceed half a million, but the country they inhabit is a wide one, stretching as it does from Adanakpa, on the Lower Niger, as far as Sokun, on the Middle Niger, and up the Benue River as far as Yimaha, which is now considered their capital.

Igbiras divide themselves into Bush and Home Igbiras (Igbira-Sima[1] and Igbira-Panda[2]), the former inhabiting the mountainous country on the right bank of the Lower Niger, immediately below the confluence, the latter being now found on the banks of the Kworra and Benue, a few miles from the confluence. The Igbira-Panda are subdivided into Kakanda and Woro Igbiras, occupying the mountains above Lokoja, the Igu Igbiras considered the purest; Koto Igbiras inhabiting Yimaha and other towns

[1] Other names: Igbira-Shima, Igbira-Saima, Igbira-Idda, Igbira-Hima.

[2] Other names: Igbira-Ihi, Igbira-Odo, Igbira-Igu or Egu, or simply Igbira, Igbala, Igberra, Birrah, Egbira, Egura, Egbira-Pande, Opanda, Kotoonfanda.

on the Benue, and now fast losing their individuality by intercourse with the Hausas, as well as many minor families or clans dwelling in the Igara country.

About the early history of the Igbiras little is known. Some natives assert that the Igbira-Sima are the more ancient branch, and formerly lived in a large town named Ohimoje, whence also the mother of the first Atta of Ida is supposed to have come; others declare the Home Igbiras to be the original possessors of the country all around the confluence, and as far south as Ida. The royal clans of the Home Igbiras, of the left bank of the Lower Niger, are the Dagbes, Nyimos, and Godos. The Dagbes appear to have been the aborigines of that part, or true Home Igbiras, but were subdued by the Igaras, to whose Atta the Dagbe kings became subservient. On the death of a certain Dagbe king, the Atta, who had the right of appointing a successor, sent for a friend of his from the Nyimos, a clan of the Bush Igbiras, and proclaimed him king. The Nyimo clan followed their chief across the river, and thus established themselves as Home Igbiras. The sovereignty of the Igbiras, however, reverted in time to the Dagbes; but, on one of the kings dying without heirs of his own clan, the succession passed to his nephew, who belonged to the Godo clan.

The Igbiras dwelling on the south bank of the Benue and the left bank of the Lower Niger are still considered vassals of the Atta of Ida, who appoints their kings. The Igbiras of Yimaha keep their independence, and call themselves Nyiete, or owners of the land. The Igu Igbiras, until quite recently, maintained a distinct and independent kingdom,[1] with Igu as the capital, but, on the destruction of their town by the Fulas, those who escaped took refuge among their own and other neighbouring tribes, the clan or family ceasing to exist.

[1] They were called Nyawa.

Half a century ago Panda (or Funda) and Igu (or Koton Karafi [1]) were the chief towns of the Igbara kingdom; both were large and populous, and considered by early explorers as most important centres of trade. Panda was the first to suffer at the hands of the Mahommedans, being completely destroyed about forty years ago. Igu held out for many years, though frequently besieged by the Nupes, who coveted its wealth, but, in 1885, it was utterly demolished, chiefly through the treachery of a neighbouring king. Most of the inhabitants were massacred, and the town is now occupied by Mahommedans.

Though suffering from continual oppression, and driven from their former homes, the Igbiras still struggle to preserve their tribal peculiarities, but sooner or later they will, in all probability, disappear as a distinct people, and merge into some of the many other tribes which surround them. They are small in stature, though strongly built, industrious, and intelligent,[2] and in every way far superior to their neighbours the Basas. Their chief occupations are fishing [3] and agriculture.[4] They keep a few sheep and goats, but very little other livestock. Like other tribes already described, they harpoon the hippopotamus,[5] but do little or

[1] Or Koton Karafi, "obtained its name from the rocks on which it stands, being impregnated with iron. This is its Hausa designation, Koto meaning Igbira, and Karafi being iron."—*Baikie.*

[2] They count from one to five, then add one, two, and so on, till ten is reached, for which they have a distinct word. They also count by fives and scores, and in large numbers by thousands and *heads*, *i.e.*, 2000 in cowries. There are no Igbira weights, but calabashes (*ogani*) are used for measuring grain and liquids.

[3] With nets and lines, though the most common method seems to be spearing the fish at night. The Igbiras use medium-sized canoes, and paddle sitting. The Basas stand to paddle.

[4] Cotton, benni seed, tobacco, indigo, a kind of hemp called *bofuro*, yams, and a few cereals, are grown. No agricultural implements, except hoes and native sickles (*renje*).

[5] Called by the Igbiras (and Igaras), *okaku*; by the Nupes, *kankuru*; by the Hausas, *dorina.*

no hunting on land. They are, in short, a quiet and peacefully-inclined people, who prefer home pursuits[1] and trading to everything else; yet they frequently have to take up arms to repel invasion, and have had many opportunities in the past of proving their bravery.

Their weapons consist of bows and poisoned arrows, and a sharp-pointed and two-edged knife,[2] carried on the right hand. They drink antidotes for poison, and each warrior carries, in a wooden ring above his elbow, a cow's tail saturated with some concoction of herbs, which, when shaken in a wounded man's face, is supposed to bring about his recovery.

Igbira towns and villages are built in the most irregular way, without streets or roads, the huts being scattered about anyhow. The town of Igu was surrounded by a wall and ditch, as is Yimaha to this day, but ordinary Igbira towns are not protected in any way. The huts as a rule are circular, though occasionally quadrangular ones are met with. In places subject to annual inundations from the river they are constructed of grass mats (*ogumo*), daubed inside with mud to keep out the wind, and are rebuilt each season. In dry places the huts are more substantial, the walls being solid erections of sunburnt bricks; the roofs are conical, and thatched with long reedy grass. Inside these dwellings there is little comfort; mud platforms, covered with a few mats, take the place of beds, and the only furniture consists of stools (*okpati*) and calabashes, forming a kind of clothes-chest (*kodo*), both of which articles are used for sitting on. This absence of furniture is not due

[1] They manufacture cloths, mats, grass-bags, ropes, pots, pipes, and native lamps. They carve wooden idols and stools, but they are neither leather-workers nor blacksmiths.

[2] Called *kappa*, the same weapon we saw at Mozum, Benue River. The Igbira also wears an iron ring on the thumb of the left hand, wherewith to guide his arrow. Spears are seldom used. The poison on the arrows is similar to that of the Igaras and Basas.

(as in the case of the Igaras) to caste rules, but simply because the people have not yet felt the want of such luxuries as tables and chairs.

Except amongst the poorer classes, the men and women live in separate huts, and take their meals separately. It is the duty of the wife to provide food[1] for her husband, and she is esteemed according to the quantity and quality of her lord's eatables. To say of a man that "the sauce of his meals is thick with fish," is to bestow the highest possible praise on his wife. The male servants of a household usually eat with their master, doing so kneeling. The wife prepares the meal, which she presents to her husband in a wooden bowl or calabash on her knees, remaining to wait on him. The meal commences by the master taking all the fish or meat out of the sauce, and placing it in an empty bowl by his side; he then begins to eat, when his slaves are allowed to dip their hands into the sauce with him, and at the end of the meal the master divides among his servants what meat he has not finished. Any one serving the master with drink first tastes it, I fancy to show that it has not been poisoned—a very necessary precaution amongst these West African tribes.

The dress of the Igbiras of both sexes differs very little from that of the Igaras; the women, as a rule, cut their hair short, and pay little attention to it, while the men, on the other hand, rather affect hair-dressing, shaving the wool in various patterns. Necklaces of beads and elephant-hair (*ckagi*) are worn by the women, and glass or clay armlets (*kerewu*) and hippopotamus-hide bangles by both the men and women. Much in the dress and ornaments of the people depends on the situation of their towns; when bordering on

[1] Their food consists of fish and meat (when they can get it), Guinea and Indian corn, yams, beans, and a grain called *moyi*. At all meals, *pito*, an intoxicant made from Guinea and Indian corn, is served.

Mahommedan territory, the dress of the Mahommedans usually predominates, whereas those Igbiras who have pagan neighbours retain to a greater degree their own ancient clothing and habits.

The tribal mark of the Niger Igbiras (men and women), is a long cut on either side of the nose, extending to the jaw. The Benue Igbiras are not generally marked, though occasionally a single incision is seen on one side of the jaw, and some women have small black tattoo marks on the chin. Tattooing the chest and arms is common in both sexes, and the women dye their bodies with camwood on certain occasions.[1]

Many of the Igbiras have been forced by their Moslem conquerors to embrace their religion, but still remain for the most part pagans at heart. Those who are still independent are idolaters,[2] and the form of their religion resembles very much that of the Igaras. They bury their dead relatives[3] in their houses, and have immense faith in their power, frequently seeking their guidance and protection, and making periodical offerings to them of goats and fowls (cocks). The first-fruits of their crops are also offered to their dead relations, bunches of grain being hung over the burial-place within the hut. Cannibalism is not practised by the Igbiras, and twins are worshipped, under the impression that their birth brings luck to the family.[4] There are only two important annual festivals. Eating the

[1] Antimony is in general use for the eyes here, as everywhere in these countries.

[2] Their idols are Sebo and Okenga. The latter also belongs to the Igaras.

[3] Igbira law forbids a widower to see the corpse of his late wife, and a widow that of her husband.

[4] The Igbiras are perhaps not more superstitious than other Africans, and possibly not more so than the country folk of England. A husband and wife must never be in the presence of the king at the same time. A cock crowing at an unusual hour of the night means death in the family, unless the cock be immediately killed. A crested crane uttering a cry in flying over a town signifies war for the town, such are the common superstitions.

new yam (equivalent to New Year's Day), which is conducted with much pomp and ceremony; sacrifices of fowls and goats are made, and wine and oil freely poured out, the king taking a prominent part in the feast. The other festival is called Owo,[1] and is also conducted by the king. In addition to much feasting and drinking, offerings are made to the god of war, usually represented by a large and sacred tree, against which arrows are shot, libations of wine and meat-offerings being strewn round the trunk.

Their marriage ceremonies and funeral rites, as well as most of their laws, are very similar to those of the Igaras, though the Igbiras are somewhat lax in the award of punishment for offences, guilty people being allowed too frequently to escape.

The Igbira language is rich in words and musical in sound, a sign perhaps that it is of some age. It has no resemblance to Igara, though traces of Nupe and Yoruba are met with. Surrounded as they are by various tribes, the Igbiras are good linguists, speaking fluently the Nupe, Hausa, Igara, Basa, and numerous other languages, a circumstance possibly to be regretted in that it may affect the purity of their own tongue.

A tribe similar in many respects to the Igbira is the Afo, now, however, fast disappearing. Their few remaining towns[2] are situated on the right bank of the Benue, north of the country of the Igbiras, and between it and the kingdom of Nassarawa. They are consequently between two Mahommedan fires, suffering from the raids of the Nupes from the north and the Nassarawas from the east.

In religion,[3] customs, pursuits, and food, the Afos resemble their neighbours, the Igbiras. They practise fortune-tell-

[1] The Otcho of the Igaras.

[2] Ube, Ita, Apau, and Muda.

[3] Their chief idol is Awarka, a wooden image clothed in white, whose head is anointed with palm oil.

ing[1] to a great extent, using for the purpose cowries and pieces of reed strung together. These are thrown on the ground, and then interpreted by the soothsayer according to the shape they assume, or, more probably, according to the fee which has been paid.

In the mountainous district north and west of Lokoja are many small pagan tribes, wild, fierce, and unsubdued, about whom little or nothing is known. South and west of the confluence, and on the right bank of the Niger, in addition to those tribes already mentioned, live the Akoko, the Gbede, and the Kukuku, or Kukuruku, all barbarous people who are at continual war with each other. The latter are hostile to Europeans and Mahommedans alike, and are strong enough to hold even the Nupes at bay.

Between the Yoruba country and the Kworra there are a few pagan tribes, such as the Woro, Efon, Kakanda (Habeh), Bunu, and Yagba,[2] who have of late years been so much oppressed by the Nupes that they have tendered their submission to the Emir, though this does not save them from being raided when the Mahommedans require slaves. These tribes are for the most part peaceful and industrious, and, were they permitted to do so, would settle down to agricultural pursuits. As matters stand, however, their country, once a land of plenty, has become almost a wilderness, and the population is rapidly decreasing. There remain only two other pagan tribes in the Middle Niger worthy of mention—the Kambari and the Borgu. The Kambaris, who inhabit the country north of Nupe, are pagans, speaking a distinct language. They are gradually being brought under Mahommedan rule, and will shortly, no doubt, lose all independence.

[1] In Hausa, *akorkori* or *dubu*, *i.e.*, consulting the fetish.

[2] The Bunus and Yagbas speak a corrupt dialect of Yoruba. They are said to have been originally runaway slaves of Yoruba masters.

The Borgus[1] are decidedly the most interesting people of the Middle Niger, being the sole pagan tribe which has successfully resisted Mahommedan invasion. For years did the Fulas of Sokotu and Gandu attempt to conquer the country, desisting, however, in the end in the firm belief that the blessing of their prophet was not with them in fighting against this strange people. They themselves ascribe their invincibility not so much to their fighting powers as to their religion,[2] which they affirm is that of "Kisra, a Jew, who gave his life for the sins of mankind." They are most indignant, and perhaps justly so, at being called pagans, considering themselves in every way far superior to the Mahommedans. They say that their forefathers were originally settled in the north of Africa, and were driven thence about the 8th or 9th century by the Mahommedan conquerors. They claim connection with Bornu, and it is to be remarked that, as Bariba is the native name for Borgu, so also the native name for Bornu is Berebere or Baribari.[3] The two tribes, therefore, before they were driven south, possibly formed part of the Barbary States. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that Borgu[4] and Bornu established order and a regular form of government in their present provinces ages before any other tribe of these parts dreamt of such things, and to this day both have remained unfettered by the Fula yoke.

[1] Their country is known as Bariba, Barba, Burgu, or Borgu. Its boundaries are—on the north, Gurma; on the east, the Kworra and Yauri; on the south, Yoruba, Nupe, and Shabe; on the west, Sugu.

[2] Missionaries who are acquainted with the people have told me that they have found amongst the Borgus a faint knowledge of Christianity, and their principal annual festival appears to be in commemoration of certain events in the life of Kisra (our Christ?), which, however, they mix up with many heathen rites.

[3] "The Hausa call the Bornu people Bérbere. Barbū is the ancient name of Borgu."—*Barth*. Barth has a lot to say about this interesting subject.

[4] The capital of Borgu is Bussa, where Mungo Park lost his life. It is situated on the right bank of the Kworra, some 650 miles from the sea.

The Borgu people are much feared by their neighbours[1] since they have frequently proved their bravery in the field. Their arms consist of spears and arrows, the poison on the latter being very deadly, and they have been able to hold their own with these weapons even against the forces of the King of Dahomey, armed with muskets. Notwithstanding their warlike qualities, they devote their time almost entirely to agriculture and trade, and their knowledge of medicines is proverbial: "whatever disease cannot be cured in Bariba land can be cured nowhere else" is a common saying amongst the other tribes of the Western Sudan. With all their good points, however, the Borgus are cut-throats and robbers at heart, and travelling in the country is attended with much danger. Trade-routes from Salaga, north-east of Ashanti, to Wangara and Masina, pass through Borgu territory, and are frequented by pilgrims to and from Mecca; but caravans, unless well armed, have to pay a heavy blackmail to secure a safe passage.

[1] "*Masudawaki goma na Burguwa sun issa kore masudawaki dari na Filani*, ten Burgu horsemen are enough to defeat one hundred Filani horsemen," is a Hausa proverb. "*Ekpa Burgu de noshe gaya*, the Burgu arrow is very poisonous," expresses the Nupe's views of their neighbours, while in Yorubaland old women say "*Oluru ybani lowo ogu Bariba*, God deliver one from a Bariba war."

CHAPTER VIII.

NUPE.

We made a halt of three days at Lokoja, revictualling for our journey up the Kworra, much of the time being occupied in interviewing chiefs, who came in from all the river-side towns near the confluence, to pay their respects to the Commissioner. The arrival of each chief caused considerable stir in the town, and was a most interesting and picturesque sight. The first warning of a chief's approach would be a distant drumming sound, mingled with the hum of the paddlers, and then, far away down the river, are seen half-a-dozen specks on the water, which gradually grow larger and larger until they shape themselves into long dug-out canoes, each flying a certain amount of bunting. Under a small awning in the foremost canoe sits the chief, arrayed in his durbar garments, and generally very much over-hatted; the drummer, seated in the centre of the little craft, beats steadily with his wooden drumstick on a powder-keg or box, thus giving the time to the twenty or thirty half-naked slaves, who dig their little paddles into the water with an energy that brings the perspiration in streams from their massive backs. With each stroke the canoe-men give forth a strange, loud, hissing sound, changed occasionally to a shout in chorus; and, on the flat stern of the canoe, stands the helmsman, motionless as a statue, directing the course of his vessel with a long-bladed oar, and guiding her into port a

little below our moorings. At the landing-place, the professional drummers [1] of Lokoja meet the chief and play him and his attendants up to the town, followed by a crowd of idlers, who are always on the look-out for some excitement of the sort.

About mid-day, on the 9th September, the *Boussa* was on the move again and making her way up the Kworra. The country passed through is hilly and open, and appears to have suffered considerably at the hands of the Fulas, the ruins of numerous towns and villages cropping up every now and then on the banks. In the afternoon we visited the small and pretty trading-station of Sossokusso,[2] on the right bank, which lies in a grove of lofty palms at the foot of a range of forest-clad hills; and, at 9 P.M., after steaming by moonlight through a beautifully wooded and undulating country, we anchored for the night off Sokun,[3] another small station, on the edge of a village whose chief claims independence of Nupe. The following day we reached Egga, the chief trading-port in the Nupe country, where we remained for two or three days, inquiring into sundry matters of importance.

The Emir of Nupe is a vassal of the Sultan of Gandu, but, beyond the payment of annual tribute, he takes very little

[1] Professional drummers are found in all Nupe and Yoruba towns, they get a few cowries from each party which they accompany, and at market-places on the river, like Lokoja and Egga, their takings are considerable. Their drum is shaped like an hour-glass, with parchment at each end, and gives forth the most peculiar sounds. A full description of it will be found in the chapter on music. Besides drummers there are other professional musicians who attend entertainments generally, and especially the night-revels so much indulged in by these people.

[2] The Niger Company buys here palm oil and kernels, rubber, rice, and Adansonia-fibre.

[3] The trade of Sokun, though not large, is varied. In addition to those articles purchased at Sossokusso, the natives bring in pepper and balsam capaiva. The latter is obtained from a large tree, in which a slit is made and a fire kindled underneath, when the sap oozes out and is caught in a gourd or calabash.

notice of his suzerain, though he acknowledges him to be his *spiritual* superior,[1] and would doubtless aid him in a religious war, if called upon to do so.

Much has been written by former travellers about the history of Nupe, from the time of the conquest of the country by the Fulas (*i.e.*, the beginning of the present century) down to some twenty years ago. The history is, in many instances, most confused; but, as no records exist in the country, and as the only historians are the mallams, whose verbal accounts of past events vary considerably, errors are to be expected. The only matter of real importance of late years is the founding of Bida, and the change in the succession of emirs which resulted from it. In 1860 Masaba[2] was Emir of Nupe, having his capital at Rabba. A few years later, one Omoru, Masaba's warrior chief, founded the town of Bida, and sent word to his master at Rabba that Bida was in every way worthy to supplant Rabba as the capital of the Nupe kingdom. Masaba visited Bida, and was so pleased with the place that he proclaimed it his capital; and, moreover, wishing to mark his approval of Omoru's conduct, decreed that should he (Masaba) die before Omoru, the latter should succeed to the throne before any of the direct heirs. Masaba died in 1873, and Omoru succeeded him, reigning until 1884. The succession then reverted to the Masaba family, and the present Emir, Malake,[3] ascended the throne. As can be imagined, the descendants of the interloper, Omoru, are not now on the best of terms with the reigning family, and consider that the succession should go alternately to them and the

[1] Maleke, the Emir, told us, with a certain amount of modesty, that the Sultan of Stamboul was the head of the Mahommedan religion, next to him came the Sultans of Sokotu and Gandu, and then himself.

[2] Ma'saba, a contraction of Mahamasaba, or some say Malam Saba.

[3] Malake is a son of Osman Saki, who was brother to, and reigned immediately before, Masaba.

Masaba family.[1] This, of course, the latter will not admit for an instant, and, therefore, it is not very improbable that, on Maleke's death, there will be some disturbance, the issue of which will, I take it, depend very much on which side the Royal Niger Company chooses to take.

The town of Egga is an important commercial centre, being the meeting-place for traders from the Upper Niger, Kano, Ilorin, and many other large districts. It stands on a low sandy spit of land, the huts being built regardless of any order and huddled close together. In the wet season, parts of the town are inundated by the river; the lanes are narrow and filthy, and the whole place gives forth a stench which at times is unendurable, and not calculated to improve the health of the inhabitants. The population, which is said to exceed 6000, is half Mahommedan and half pagan, the conquered race gradually adopting the religion of the Fulas. A few rough barn-like mosques exist, but there are no schools,[2] nor other signs of civilisation, which one might expect to find in one of the largest towns of a flourishing Mahommedan kingdom.

The factory of the Niger Company, surrounded by a high wall, overlooks the river. It consists of excellent quarters for the agents, similar to the house at Akassa, with rows of the usual iron storesheds on either side. Inside the walls, the yard is full of life from daybreak to dusk. Strings of women pour through the narrow gateway with their earthen-

[1] Alihu, called the Shiaba, is the eldest living son of Masaba, and heir to the throne. He is head of the Masaba faction. The Omoru party is under the leadership of the Makum (Jia by name), Omoru's eldest son, whose chief power lies in the fact that he has by some means, best known to himself, become possessed of a certain number of rifles and cartridges. As matters stand, Jia is to reign after Alihu, there being two Emirs of the Masaba family to one of the Omoru.

[2] The only attempt at education is teaching the children of Mahommedans to learn passages from the Koran by heart.

ware pots of palm oil and Shea butter[1] on their heads; groups of labourers are busy filling casks with these articles for the English market; native blacksmiths are at work under a shed, blowing their charcoal fires with their quaint bellows (formed of a couple of skins and some hollow bamboos); and, in a commanding position on a wood pile, stands a solemn-looking marabou[2] stork, surveying the scene with an air of the deepest concern.

Between the factory and our steamer is a narrow strip of ground, forming a highway from one part of the town to the other. Here, before sunrise, the local butchers establish their shops, laying out tempting pieces of meat on the ground, and haggling in loud tones over each bargain; while rows of hungry-looking turkey-buzzards sit within a few feet, eagerly watching their opportunity to seize a scrap. Their impudence is wonderful, and, if the butcher once turns his back, a raid is immediately made on the nearest bit of meat; but the successful thief has to fight with all his brother buzzards before he devours his ill-gotten gains, and more often than not gets nothing for his trouble. By eight o'clock the sun grows hot, and swarms of flies appear on the scene, forcing the butchers to remove their wares. Natives gradually collect by the steamer's side, and the noise throughout the day is deafening. Men, women, and children squat about on the bank, some mere idle sightseers,

[1] This is a vegetable butter obtained from the fruit of the *Butyrospermum Parkii* or *Bassia Parkii* (discovered by Mungo Park, and named by Ferdinand Bassi, curator of the Bologna Botanical Gardens). The tree is handsome, and resembles the American oak. The use made of the article in England is various. It contains certain medicinal properties, with which the natives are fully acquainted, applying it both externally and internally. Holloway is said to have introduced it into his ointment. Shea butter is bought in Nupe territory at from £5 to £6, 10s. per puncheon of 220 gallons, but the price in the English market is ruled by that of palm oil. It is manufactured in a very similar manner to the latter oil, the nut, which is about the size of a walnut, being dried, crushed, and then boiled.

[2] *Ciconia marabou.*

others intent on selling yams or pieces of country-cloth to the crew, all joining with one accord in the general hubbub. Occasionally, an important-looking Mahommedan, in flowing tobe and shoulder-slung sword, passes on his way to mosque, and now and again a canoe from across the river paddles up and deposits its load of market-goers at the landing-place. At night the jabbering mass of humanity disappears, but worse noises are forthcoming, for, shortly after dark, the drummers commence their operations, banging on their tom-toms with a lustiness worthy of a better cause. The Mahommedan Nupe lives the life of a man-about-town; his days are spent in indolence, his nights in feasting, dancing, and merriment. The pagan Nupe's[1] existence is different: his lot is to toil for his masters, to cultivate the land, to work in leather and in brass, to weave, and to ply a hundred other trades.

We were forced to stay at Egga, while making arrangements for our visit to Bida; the time, however, passed quickly enough, as there was always something new to see and something interesting to do, besides the continual interviewing of chiefs, the sameness of which begins somewhat to pall. During our wanderings in the town, we discovered the house of the Emir's chief blacksmith, whom we found seated in a little shed outside his hut, busy making a brass trumpet for his master; the workmanship was perhaps rough, but showed considerable skill, the instrument being in two pieces, and about six feet long. We wanted to try its tone, but nothing would induce the maker to let us, as he assured us that it was as much as his life was worth to permit any one to place his lips to it while it was in his

[1] Sultan Bello, in his geographical and historical work, brought to England by Captain Clapperton in 1824, says of the people of Nupe, "Their true origin is a mixture of Katshena, Zaria, Kano, and other places. They possess much knowledge in the fine and rare arts, and from their country many elegant and marvellous things are still exported."

hands.[1] His shed was scattered with brass bowls, water-pots, and other vessels, hammered out with tasteful and artistic designs, and in the corner stood a bundle of half-finished spears made of iron and brass throughout.

Another industry which interested us here was leather working, at which the Nupes excel, making saddlery, embroidered slippers, sword-scabbards, bags, and sundry other articles, as well as embellishments for their great straw hats and coverings for baskets. They prepare the leather themselves in a most simple manner; the skin is well soaked in water, and then stretched between two sticks, and the hair scraped off with a piece of iron, after which it is washed, stretched, and dried, the final process of softening being merely by continuous rubbing between the hands. They dye their leather in various colours, the principal being black, red, yellow, green, and pale blue, all obtained from shrubs and trees of the country, and generally concocted with the juice of the kola nut.

The cool hours of the evenings we spent in the surf-boat belonging to the *Boussa*, being paddled about lazily among the backwaters of the river in search of birds. The Kru boys are now thoroughly trained to the business, and "Bottle-of-beer," their head man, standing at the helm, silently signals his orders to the dozen paddlers, who immediately guide the boat in the direction required, to obtain an easy shot at some passing bird. Geese, ducks, and many kinds of waterfowl were plentiful, and, among the reeds, flocks of smaller birds, which provided abundant work for our stuffer. Before leaving Lokoja, we handed over all our Benue specimens to the agent on shore, thinking that we should not have time to take care of them on

[1] Notwithstanding all this, the trumpet came into our possession before that day's sun went down, which shows perhaps that a Nupe sets a small value on his head—about three fathoms of white croydons.

our voyage up the Kworra. Moreover, they were suffering from the continual damp, and that pest of collectors, the Bacon-beetle (*Dermestes ladratus*), and required to be well looked after. These quiet evenings on the water are very pleasant, after the noise and heat of the day, and the scenery on a fine evening, as one looks across the river, towards the mission-station of Kipo Hill, is filled with charming peacefulness. The river, swollen as it is, resembles an inland sea, and the low hills in the direction of Bida, flushed with the glow of the setting sun, lend softness to the landscape.

Two hours before daylight, on the 13th September, we left Egga in the *Boussa*, and went up stream, reaching the mouth of the Wanangi River at sunrise, where we transhipped ourselves into the S.S. *Soudan*,[1] in which we were to make the journey to Wanangi, the port of Bida. Wanangi lies about thirty-five miles up the river of the same name, and can be reached from the Kworra by land as well as by water, though, at this time of the year, owing to the swollen state of the streams, the land journey is troublesome, and rarely undertaken. The practicability of ascending the river in so large a boat as the *Soudan* was doubtful; we had, however, no other means at our disposal, as we had left our little friend, the *Benue*, at Lokoja, and poling up the stream in canoes, during the wet season, is too lengthy an operation to be thought of.

At the first bend of the river our vessel ran aground, and all the crew had to go overboard to shove her off. This was the commencement of our troubles, which continued throughout the day. The next bend was too sharp for us altogether, and the stern of the boat suffered considerably from the boughs of the over-hanging trees, which swept the poop

[1] A small steamer about 120 feet in length, drawing three feet nine inches forward, and five feet six inches aft.

clean, carrying away awning, stanchions, and everything else. We had hardly recovered from this when we were aground again, and this time apparently stuck fast. The anchor was taken out, but the hawser broke, and it took us hours getting afloat. This sort of thing was repeated over and over again, and at nightfall we found ourselves still some miles from our destination. Nothing daunted, however, our gallant captain, Wallace, still kept on, and finally landed us, at 9 P.M., at Wanangi, where we put up in the disused factory of the Niger Company, and immediately despatched a messenger to Bida to announce our arrival. The town of Wanangi (constructed of conical grass huts) stands on the edge of the water, and surrounds our temporary abode. It is of no great size, and contains not more than 1500 inhabitants, its only importance being that it is the port of the Nupe capital. At one time the Niger Company conducted trade here, but found that it was of little use keeping up the place with Egga so close, and, moreover, they were not sorry to remove from the immediate neighbourhood of the Emir, who at times is somewhat exacting in his demands.

Two horsemen arrived early next morning from the capital, eight miles away, bearing messages of welcome from the Emir and the N'deji or Prime Minister, accompanied by slaves carrying calabashes of kola nuts[1]—the usual peace-offering to a stranger. The Commissioner returned his thanks, and sent word that his wuzeer would convey his messages to Bida in the afternoon.

Now the wuzeer of the Great White Queen's envoy was no other than myself, and the afternoon found me dressed

[1] Gura or kola nuts (the fruit of the *Sterculia* (cola), *acuminata*, and *macrocarpa*) are extensively grown in the country, the larger kind being called "king's kola nuts," since they are cultivated solely for the use of the chiefs. The nut, which is about the size and shape of a large Brazil nut, has a bitter taste, not very pleasing to Europeans. It is, however, much appreciated by

in my best red coat, waiting for the horse-boy to bring round my charger. I was escorted by a corporal and six of the constabulary, and Mr. John attended me as interpreter. The start was not altogether a success, but caused us some amusement, which is always a great point in Africa. Round the yard of our house is a high mud wall, the entrance on the Bida side being by a narrow and low doorway. I mounted my pony outside the door, thinking that it was too low to ride under. My interpreter, who, I may mention, is the acme of respectability and always got up in a faultless frock-coat, thought otherwise, and mounted in the yard. He was, however, no sooner in the saddle than his pony was off after mine through the door, and, before the poor old gentleman could duck his head, the lintel caught him in the chest, and swept him swiftly over his pony's tail. Fortunately there was no damage done, beyond creases on the coat tails, and we went on our way through Wanangi rather pleased than otherwise.

Outside the town the narrow sandy path leads us through a fairly open and well-cultivated country, about which a few little farms are scattered, their yellow straw-built huts contrasting with the verdure of the surrounding corn-fields. As we ride soberly along in the heat of the afternoon sun, we overtake strings of slave women bearing calabashes of grain from the farms to the town, and every now and then a haughty-looking horseman passes us, hardly deigning to leave the narrow path for us to go by. About halfway the road winds up a gentle slope, from the top of which Bida is visible for the first time, lying snug and sheltered in a far-stretching valley, and, like Yola and other Benue towns, almost concealed by the numerous large trees which shade

the natives, who chew it incessantly. It is said to be highly nutritious and sustaining, and more or less takes the place of coffee, which is unknown in these parts. Where an Arab sheikh would hand round coffee, the Felata chief offers his visitors a kola nut.

its various compounds. A low and dilapidated mud wall runs round the place, which is rectangular in shape, and, as far as I could judge, about two miles long by one broad.

A heavy storm had overtaken us on the road and forced us to take shelter under a clump of trees, and so it was not till almost sunset that we reached the gate of the town, where we were met by a mounted messenger from the N'deji, and conducted to the latter's house.

High mud walls surround the N'deji's residence, which I found on entering to be very superior to anything I had previously seen, showing signs of art in adornment, and comfort in plan of construction. The entrance-hut,[1] which is situated on one side of a large open space, has a huge thatched dome, the front of which is supported by carved wooden pillars about three feet in height and six inches in diameter, and on the inside of the pillars is a verandah, the back of which is formed by the wall of the hut. At the outer door we were received by the master of the house himself, and led by the hand, with a kindly politeness, into one of the inner chambers.

The N'deji, whose manners are those of a polished gentleman, is about sixty-five years of age, tall and well proportioned; his features are refined, and, when he speaks, his face lights up with a pleasing smile, which is apt to put one off one's guard, for in reality the man is a cunning and unprincipled diplomatist, who rules the Emir, and whose love of wealth overcomes all scruples. Low-born, yet intelligent above his fellows, he made a name as a soldier, and by his astuteness and tact gained immense power over the Emir, who in time raised him to the position of Prime Minister. The ambition of the N'deji knows no bounds, and, since he shares with the Emir the Niger Company's subsidy and the revenues of the kingdom, he has become

[1] *Zolahe.*

wealthy—so wealthy in fact that he can afford to give handsome dowries to his daughters, for whom he seeks alliances among the Nupe aristocracy. Between the outer hut, or hall, and the reception-chamber are the N'deji's stables, which contain a number of stalls, filled with the small horses of the country; the roof of the stable is arched, and rests on eight massive pillars,[1] constructed of black mud well-polished on the outside, the floor also is black and smooth, and the whole interior is tastefully decorated with designs in dark red colouring. Arrived at the inner chamber, my host seated me on a couch, placing himself at my side; then, breaking a kola nut in half, he put a portion in his mouth and offered me the remainder, as a sign of friendship and welcome. Our conversation was of short duration, as I was desirous of seeing the Emir before darkness set in. The N'deji, in accordance with my wishes, ordered his horse, and called to his attendants to bring his sword and turban. In answer to his summons a small boy appeared, bearing in his hands a large Nupe hat, in which was a turban of dark-blue Kano cloth.[2] The boy knelt at the feet of his master, who proceeded to arrange his turban, not forgetting to draw the end across his face, while over the structure he placed the wide-brimmed hat. Mounted on a showy little grey horse, whose gaudy trappings hung down almost to the ground, and attended by his chief sword-bearer, the old minister presented an appearance at once striking and picturesque; and, riding by his side, although dressed, as I was, in the full uniform of a British officer, I confess I felt decidedly small in comparison with him.

The Emir's palace is situated about half a mile from the N'deji's house, and is surrounded by a high wall, the entrance

[1] Architecturally not unlike the pillars of some Egyptian temples.

[2] This Kano cotton stuff is dyed with indigo, and highly glazed, the glaze being obtained by means of wooden rollers.

being by the ordinary lodge hut, which in this case is larger than usual, and with a thatch reaching right down to the ground. Leaving our horses with the Hausa escort, under a cluster of trees, which gave shade to the piece of ground in front of the royal residence, we passed through the first hut into a spacious courtyard, in which a dozen or more pink-thighed ostriches were wandering about; thence we entered a large mud hut, the roof of which, like the N'deji's stables, is arched and supported by solid pillars. My guide now left me to make known my arrival to the Emir, and, after spending a quarter of an hour under the eager scrutiny of some fifty pairs of eyes, I was ushered into a small yard, enclosed by low buildings, in the centre of which, surrounded by his attendants, was the Emir Maleke, reclining on a couch. I am afraid I was somewhat disappointed at my first sight of the Emir and his court, for I had foolishly imagined that, in this ruler of a vast Mahommedan kingdom, I should find almost the equal of some of the princes of India, instead of which I saw before me a man of perhaps forty-five years of age, with a bloated and repulsive countenance, whose dress consisted of scanty and soiled linen, and whose hands and feet were covered with a loathsome disease—apparently leprosy. My feelings at having to shake hands with this individual can be better imagined than described. After the usual salutations on both sides, I delivered the Commissioner's message, which was to the effect that he was the envoy of Her Majesty, and wished to hold an interview with the sovereign of the Nupe kingdom, and for that purpose had arrived at Wanangi; he now desired that the Emir would come to Wanangi to see him.[1] Maleke made no reply, but commenced scratching

[1] This request, I may as well mention, we never for a moment imagined that the Emir would grant; but it was thought best, knowing Maleke's arrogant nature, to put it forward, in order to show him that he was not regarded by white people with quite the amount of importance that he thought he was.

the soles of his naked feet, as if engaged in deep thought. For some ten minutes we sat in solemn silence, and then the chief mallam of the court, who had been standing by the Emir, suddenly rose and proclaimed that it was the hour of evening prayer. Thinking that I ought possibly to withdraw while the devotions were going on, I made a motion as if to go, but was told by the N'deji that I had better remain. Prayers were repeated aloud in the orthodox Mahommedan fashion, all present joining. In one corner knelt two young Fula women, dressed alike, in pale-blue garments, who, at the conclusion of the prayers, advanced to the front, and, kneeling down, bowed their heads to the ground, at the feet of the N'deji, the mallam, and the Emir, in succession, after which one of them brought a bowl of water, and washed the Emir's feet. The interview, which was now resumed, lasted another twenty minutes, the Emir in the end agreeing to meet the Commissioner in state outside the town and conduct him to the palace. More than this he said it was impossible to do, without lowering himself in the eyes of his people.

Leaving the Emir's residence in the dusk, we rode homewards through the night market,[1] which was now brilliantly illuminated with thousands of tiny oil lamps resting on the ground. Rows of women sit with calabashes and baskets round them, selling pieces of cloth, ornaments, yams, ground nuts, and other eatables, while crowds of people roam about among the sellers making their purchases.[2]

The Commissioner determined that, as the Emir would not come to Wanangi, he would visit Bida without any ceremony whatever, and sent word to the N'deji to that effect. Leaving Wanangi at mid-day the following day, we

[1] Most of the marketing is done after dark in these large towns, probably for the sake of coolness.

[2] These small articles are bought with cowries, the value of which depends a good deal on the supply, but is roughly 130 cowries to a penny.

rode rapidly to the capital, unattended except by the interpreter, and, after refreshing ourselves with a bowl of curds and honey at the N'deji's house, we proceeded to the palace where we were, after a little delay, admitted into the Emir's presence.

The interview was a lengthy one, and exceedingly interesting, in that we learned from it the state of the Emir's feelings towards the English Company and towards other European people; and, moreover, we gained an insight into the smallness of this worthy monarch's mind. Just before leaving, Major MacDonald asked Maleke when he was coming to England to see the Queen, to which he replied, "The Queen should come and see *me;* Mahommedans never visit England." The Major then related how, in the Crimean War, England had fought for Turkey and how, after the war, the Sultan of Turkey, the head of the Mahommedan religion, had visited the Queen. The Emir in great wrath said that that was absurd, and that the man who had told the Major such a thing was a liar of the worst description. It was impossible to convince a person of the Emir's obstinacy, and, in order to prevent a breach of friendship, we left the excellent gentleman to stew in his own blissful ignorance. Maleke is perfectly illiterate, and knows nothing of the world outside Nupe. Lying to his majesty is punishable with death, and, therefore, it is hardly to be wondered at that no subject has yet been bold enough to relate the events and wonders of western countries, and thus even such things as railways, telegraphs, and the like, are wholly unknown to this great ruler.

The *Soudan* left on the 15th under the care of Wallace, who deemed it wisest to take her down the Wanangi River quietly, and not subject us to the possibility of being left high and dry on a sandbank; so we made arrangements to return to Egga in canoes.

Most of the 16th we spent about Wanangi, despatching to the Emir and the N'deji presents of Oriental carpets, silks, swords, and sundry other articles, which we had brought from England, photographing the country round, and collecting specimens of the small birds of the place. The house we occupied was a large mud building, at one time used as a store, dwelling-house, and shop. The inner rooms being dark and stuffy, we took up our abode in a verandah which, though somewhat exposed to the storms which occasionally burst on us, had, at any rate, the merit of being cool. The caretaker of the house was a poultry fancier, and the courtyard was alive with Egyptian geese, Muscovy ducks, fowls of many varieties, and pigeons, watching whose quaint goings-on helped us to pass the hot hours of the day. On the morning after our arrival, an old duck appeared on the scenes with a brood of eight little fluffy ducklings; but she was a miserably careless mother, and in twenty-four hours lost five of her offspring, much to the joy, no doubt, of a dozen filthy-looking turkey-buzzards who sat all about the wall of the yard waiting for something to die. Another aspiring mother, also of Muscovy descent, had built her nest in rather an elevated position, having selected a quiet corner under the eaves of our house, some ten feet from the ground, where she sat all day, coming down with a tremendous clatter for a few minutes in the morning and evening to feed. The ways of these Muscovies are certainly peculiar, for the only drake of the party appeared to take no notice of his lawful wives, but spent his time in making love to a poor, shy, young Cochin-China hen.

Walking through the town in the cool of the evening, we had an opportunity of seeing some men and women at work, weaving the country cloth so much valued by the natives, and which they consider far superior to any Manchester goods. The manner of weaving is very primitive,

the looms and shuttles being of the roughest description. Men and women use different-sized looms (why I could not discover); all the cloth produced by men being woven on a five-inch loom, which gives pieces of stuff four and a-half inches wide, and, apparently, of unlimited length. These strips are cut up into the required lengths and then sewn together, and when made into garments do not look so patchy as might be expected. The woman's loom is about five feet high and three feet wide, on which she weaves a piece of cloth rather smaller than these dimensions, two such pieces, when joined together, forming her clothing. Almost every native can spin and weave, and a woman's first duty after marriage is to spin enough cotton to make her husband a tobe and a pair of pyjamas. The method of spinning is as primitive as that of weaving, the spindle consisting merely of a thin short stick with a ball of clay at the end.

We were to have started on our canoe journey at midnight when we thought there would be sufficient moon to light the way; so we sent all our things on board at ten o'clock, and remained in our verandah in hopes of getting some repose before starting. We had, however, packed up our curtains, forgetting the mosquitoes and sandflies, and so sleep was quite out of the question. At the hour fixed for making a move, rain was falling in torrents, and the moon was wholly obscured, consequently we did not get away until two in the morning.

We had engaged five large, flat-bottomed, dug-out canoes, all partially covered in with mat awnings. The Major and I occupied the largest, the dimensions of which were about thirty feet long and four feet wide in the centre, the sides being cut straight down to a depth of three feet or so. Our bedding was laid at the bottom of the canoe, which gave us plenty of room to lie feet to feet. We might have

spent a fairly comfortable night had not the rain penetrated our awning, and saturated the beds; however, with the aid of waterproof sheets, we managed to sleep pretty soundly until long after daybreak. Conscious of a strong odour close to my nose, I awoke to discover that my head was within a few feet of two naked paddlers, who were standing in the fore-part of the canoe, and occasionally dipping their paddles lazily into the water. On the platform in the stern two other paddlers stood, directing our course with their oars. We mildly suggested that a little more speed would not be amiss, but it had no effect, the indolent crew arguing that God made the water flow down the Wanangi River to lighten the labours of the canoe-men, and it would be tempting Providence to go faster than the current took us. "But how about your return journey?" we asked. "Oh, that's nothing," was their reply, "the canoes will be empty then, and we can pole along the banks at our leisure, there's plenty of time."

It was comfortable travelling in spite of our slow progress, and occasional shots at the guinea-fowl, which we found perched on the trees, enlivened the early morning. The banks were covered with dense tropical vegetation, orchids and creepers hanging over the water in wild luxuriance; gay-coloured butterflies flitted round the tops of the trees, far out of reach, and innumerable varieties of beautiful birds were frightened from their haunts by the noise of our canoes. When meal-time arrived, the cook's canoe came alongside, and our dishes of "palm-oil chop," and other luxuries were handed on board. We were having, in fact, a very pleasant water-picnic, though spoiled, alas! too soon, by the elements, a wetting rain descending on us at noon, and continuing until our procession of boats entered the Kworra and reached Egga. We were fortunate, however, in not having encountered a tornado when in the open

river, for few canoes can live in the sea that gets up on these occasions, and many are the deaths from drowning which occur at this season of the year.

Presents from the Emir arrived next morning. We thought that perhaps he would produce a few tusks from his stores, but he merely sent a couple of spears, a bullock's hide, six brass pots, and three or four cotton tobes, which were of course perfectly valueless to us, except as curiosities.

A very violent tornado swept down on us in the afternoon, and the poor old *Boussa*, moored off the factory, suffered severely. We witnessed the storm from the agent's quarters, where we were getting our correspondence ready for the homeward mail. For an hour or two the air had been still, and the atmosphere stuffy to a degree, then a slight ripple was seen on the river in the far distance, and the natives, knowing well the sign, scattered to their homes. The sky became as black as night, and in five minutes the whirlwind was upon us in full fury. The thatch of the houses flew about in all directions, and looking towards the *Boussa*, we saw the storm strike her broadside on; for some time we thought she would blow over, but the wind seemed to pass through her, though stopping for a moment to vent its wrath on her large canvas awning, and tearing it into a thousand pieces, carried its shreds out of sight. The wooden sun-deck, which roofed in our cabins on the upper deck, was the next to go; the boards were lifted up and hurled right and left about the neighbourhood; the iron stanchions, which supported the structure, being rooted up from the deck, into which they were screwed, and twisted out of shape. Much damage was done on land as well as on the water, and, later in the evening, Egga was filled with lamentations, for two large canoes, returning from the market at Kipo, had capsised in mid-stream, and more than fifty persons had been lost; one small boy, who was

picked up on a sandbank, being the sole survivor of the accident.

Originally the Commissioner intended to proceed to Rabba in our large steamer and then attempt to ascend, in the steam-launch *Vigilant*, the rapids near Boussa, where Mungo Park perished. The *Vigilant*, however, we found was not available, being employed on a small punitive expedition against some of the tribes of the Lower Niger; we therefore determined to visit Rabba and then, returning down-stream to Shonga, make the overland journey to Ilorin.

All the 19th was spent in making preparations for the Ilorin expedition, embarking our five little horses, and getting our baggage made up into proper loads for the carriers. The Rev. Mr. Paul,[1] a native of Yoruba, and for many years in charge of the Kipo Hill mission-station, volunteered to accompany us as interpreter, the Yoruba and Nupe languages now taking the place of Hausa.

At ten o'clock on the morning of the 20th we steamed off up the Kworra, and, during the day, passed through some remarkably fine scenery; in some places ranges of wild and rugged-topped hills sloped down to the water for many miles, whilst in others a vast park-like expanse stretched north and south as far as one could see, the river still rolling down a thousand yards or more in width. Egbaji,[2] a small station of the Niger Company, lying in a dismal-looking swamp, was reached at sunset, and here we anchored for the night.

Running for thirteen uneventful hours on the following day, through a scantily populated country, at 8 A.M., on the 22nd September, we dropped anchor off Rabba.[3]

Rabba was formerly the capital of the Nupe kingdom,

[1] Known to the Nupes as "Mallam Kipo."

[2] The trade here is poor, though Shea butter, hides, kernels, pepper, and rice are purchased by the Company.

[3] Rabba is distant about 530 miles from the sea at Akassa.

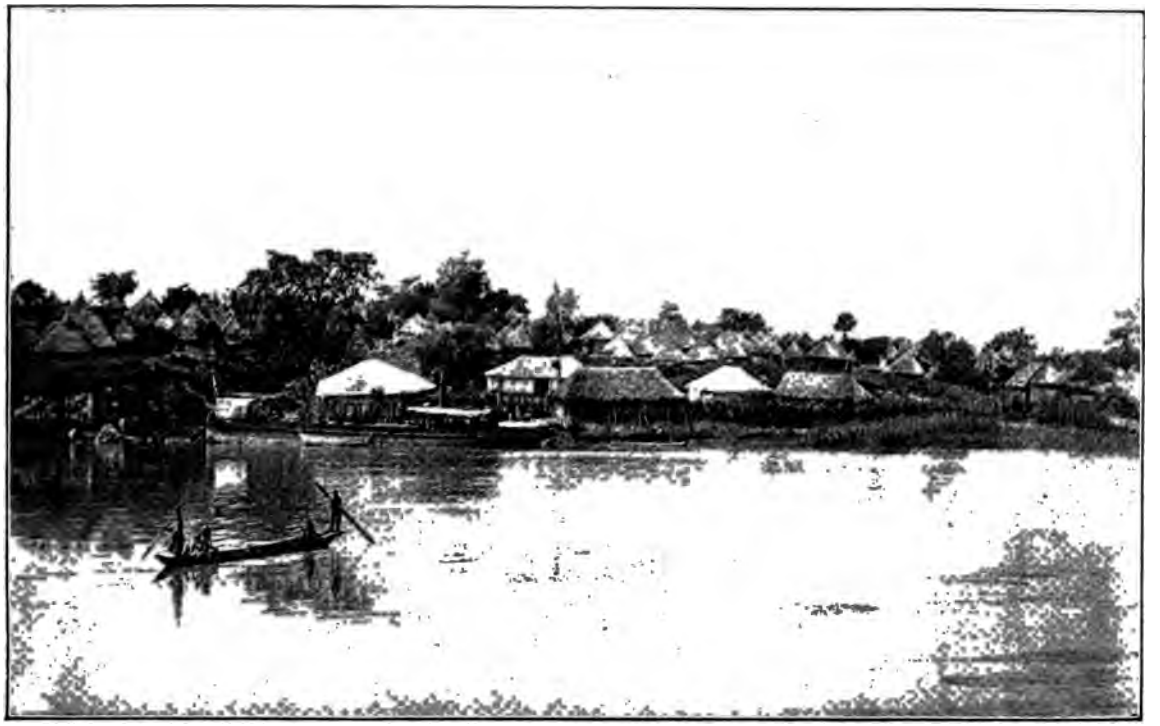
and the burial-place of its kings, and, fifty years ago, was the most important and prosperous town on the banks of the Kworra; but, since the removal of the capital to Bida, it has decreased immensely in size, and is hardly worthy of being called anything more than a village. It is by far the most picturesque place that we have seen on the river, and the red cliffs above the town, walling in the waters of the Kworra, add considerably to its general appearance, while the white walls of the Niger Company's factory,[1] standing out at the waterside, relieve the monotony of the clusters of little grass huts, which stud the undulating country.

After holding a durbar in the morning, and distributing presents to the chief mallam,[2] and other officials, we walked through the town and into the market, where we found exposed for sale yams, onions, senna-leaves, corn, rice, sweet potatoes, dried fish, ground nuts, salt, and a few little personal ornaments. Some of the latter we purchased as curiosities, amongst them being waist girdles, made of the backbones of fish and snakes strung together, and glass[3] ear-studs, with which the women adorn themselves. The Commissioner gained a cheap popularity here. He had provided himself, before leaving England, with a quantity of bright new shillings and sixpences, some of which he distributed amongst the women and children of the town. They *took* tremendously, for they attach them to rings,

[1] This is the Company's highest station on the Kworra, though they propose shortly opening up trade with Bussa. At Rabba the following are produced:—Shea butter, hides, kernels, gum-arabic, Igara kernels, pepper, and rice.

[2] The Emir's representative.

[3] The Nupes are far-famed for their skill in working up glass, and old bottles are eagerly sought after, being melted down and formed into the heavy glass armlets worn by the men above the elbow, and various other ornaments. Soda-water bottles fetch a good price, and one day at Egga, wishing to buy a musical instrument which I saw a native playing, I sent my little servant to strike a bargain. He returned with the instrument, and to my inquiry as to the price he had paid, he replied "one emmet bottle, sah!" (an empty bottle).



RABBA.

and wear them on their fingers, considering them of priceless value. We were followed about the place by the public crier, who amused himself by singing our praises, occasionally varying the entertainment with a tune on a kind of flute. Wishing to rid ourselves of the annoyance of his attentions, we gave him a piece of cloth, which he received with a yell of delight, throwing it high into the air, and shouting at the top of his voice, "Look all you people: the messenger of our mother, the Great White Queen, has given me a piece of cloth!"

In the evening we paddled up stream a short distance to get a shot at some wild-fowl, and got a fair bag of duck besides a pelican and a white egret. The scenery on the river above Rabba is magnificent, and, from all accounts, continues to improve the higher one goes, until the rapids are reached, which bar further progress. These rapids, so fatal to the first explorer of the river, are capable of being navigated by canoes, though natives, travelling to Bussa, always prefer making a détour of some thirty miles by land.

At daybreak we commenced our return journey, and a little later reached the mouth of the Shonga River, flowing into the Kworra from the south. The river, though deep, is narrow and tortuous, and our steamer came in frequent contact with the heavy branches of the trees which hung over the stream, suffering a certain amount of damage. Shonga lies on the right bank, about eight miles from the mouth of the river, which at this season overflows its banks to such an extent that the town is unapproachable save by canoes. It was therefore necessary to land our horses at a small village about half-way up the river, where the steamer could get to within twenty yards of the bank. We had considerable difficulty, even there, in putting our little beasts on dry land, for they naturally refused to jump

straight into the water and swim ashore, and the continued efforts of half-a-dozen Krooboys could not persuade them.

After many futile attempts, we were for giving up the idea of disembarking them without the aid of canoes, when one of the crew, "Strike-a-light" by name, proved to us that those who had christened him foresaw the extent to which his brain would develop, and devised a scheme which gave admirable results. There happened to be on board a large wooden door, some eight feet square. This was run out from the deck just above the water, two Krooboys standing in the water to support it; another Krooboy on the bank held the end of a rope attached to the victim's head, whilst two others on the steamer led him on to the trap. No sooner were his four feet safely on the door than the supporters let go suddenly, and the animal, finding himself in the water, quickly made for land.

The river widens opposite Shonga, forming a kind of lagoon, where we anchored at a distance of half-a-mile from the town, and remained for the next two days, enjoying the cool breezes and watching the natives catching the huge fish, which appear to swarm in the stream. The Nupes have various methods of taking the fish, though perhaps the most common in these parts is by means of a quantity of well-baited hooks attached to large floats. These are allowed to be carried down by the current; the fisherman follows in his canoe at a respectful distance until he sees the float go under, when he makes a dash and secures the fish.

The town of Shonga is divided into two parts, in fact I may say that there are two distinct towns; the one, which surrounds the Niger Company's factory, belongs to the Emir of Nupe, the other, half-a-mile away, to the Shiaba. As we were to obtain here our carriers for the Ilorin journey, it

was necessary to give handsome presents to the head man of the town, who came to visit us. He accordingly went away, having received twenty bags of salt[1] and a Broussa prayer-carpet. Later on, however, we discovered that he was by no means the most important person of the place, being merely the head man of the smaller or Emir's town. The Shiaba's town, we found, was overrun by individuals who style themselves "princes," and before our departure for Ilorin we had stormy scenes on the subject of presents with some of these gentlemen.

These so-called princes are the offspring of Masaba and Omoru, and are the curse of the Nupe kingdom, oppressing the people far and wide. Their numbers appear to be countless, and in Shonga itself there are no fewer than nineteen. The aristocratic ruffians gather round themselves a following of undisciplined Mahommedans and heathen slaves, and make frequent raids on the peaceful aborigines of the country, entering their villages and committing enormities which the miserable people are unable to resist.[2] More than half the population of Nupe is heathen, and were they well led and organised they might easily drive the Fulas from the land. Unfortunately for them they have no power at their head and no union, and their poverty keeps them badly armed. The Mahommedans owe their supremacy to their horses and arms, the greater portion of each prince's followers being mounted and armed with muskets, spears, swords, knives, and bows and arrows. Their method of fighting is perhaps simple, but nevertheless effective. The horsemen move ahead *en masse*, rush the village with a wild yell, the inhabi-

[1] A bag of salt here is equivalent to five shillings.

[2] It is a curious fact that, although the heathen Nupes live in a state of terror, never knowing what may happen to them, they are the most cheerful people in the Niger Territories; though they may be raided and their villages pillaged by the Felata hordes one day, yet the next they are feasting and enjoying themselves.

tants generally surrendering at once. The footmen, or *danganas*, then enter, and tie up the number of slaves they require, and loot the place. It is truly a wretched state of affairs, but, doubtless, when the Niger Company gains a firmer footing in the land, such things will cease.

CHAPTER IX.

ILORIN.

THE Yoruba country[1] is bounded on the north by the kingdom of Nupe, and stretches southwards as far as the colony of Lagos. It contains many large towns or cities, such as Abeokuta, Ijebu-ode, Oyo,[2] Ibadan, Isehin, Ikirun, and Ilorin,[3] all of which have a population of over 50,000 inhabitants. Nearly the whole of the foreign trade of the country goes to Lagos, though that of the northern portion (*i.e.*, the kingdom of Ilorin) is tapped by the Niger Company.

The Yoruba speaking people[4] are divided into numerous tribes, the principal of which are the Ilorins, Ibadans, Ijeshas, Ketus, Ijebus, Ifes, Egbas (Abeokuta), Ondos, and Ekitis, who, for the past fifteen or twenty years, have been carrying on continuous wars among themselves, thereby interfering with the peaceful occupations of the inhabitants and keeping the trade of the country at a standstill. The chief

[1] Sultan Bello gives the following account of the Yorubas :—"The inhabitants of the province, it is supposed, originated from the remnants of the children of Canaan, who were of the tribe of Nimrod. The cause of their establishment in the west of Africa was, as it is stated, in consequence of their being driven by Yaa-Rooba, son of Kahtan, out of Arabia, to the western coast between Egypt and Abyssinia. From that spot they advanced into the interior of Africa, till they reached Yarba, where they fixed their residence."

[2] Oyo is the capital of Yorubaland, and the Alafin is the acknowledged head of the people.

[3] The *n* is hardly pronounced, being merely a nasal sound. It is also written Alorie.

[4] Partly Mahommedan and partly pagan.

offenders are the Egbas and the Ibadans, who have been sworn enemies for a quarter of a century, the other tribes joining either side at different times; but on our visit to the country the war was confined to the Ibadans and the Ilorins, supported by the Ekiti-Parapo (a confederation of minor tribes). The British authorities at Lagos have made frequent attempts to mediate between the belligerents, but without success. They assert that the Ibadans are desirous of peace, but that their enemies, the Ilorins, refuse to abandon the war; it was therefore with the object of testing the truth of this that Major MacDonald was commissioned by the Colonial Office to proceed to Ilorin from the north.

When Dan Fodio divided his newly acquired possessions between his two sons, the kingdom of Ilorin, it will be remembered, fell to Abdulahi, the younger son of the great Fula conqueror. The founding of the kingdom, however, was due to one Alimi, a near relative of Dan Fodio, and took place about the time that Mallam Dendo was working in Nupe to overturn the old dynasty. Ilorin was then a pagan village, ruled over by an ambitious chief, Afouja by name. Alimi, who was a Mahommedan priest, or mallam, found his way to the village, and was employed by Afouja to make charms for him, by the use of which he should become fortunate in the chase as well as powerful as a ruler. Alimi gained great influence over Afouja, and, under the pretext of aiding the pagan chief in his frontier wars, sent to the north for Mahommedan reinforcements. These Felata troops he placed under the command of his four sons, Abdul-Salami, Sitta, Damialu and Abubekr, and speedily got rid of Afouja and his followers. Alimi proclaimed Ilorin a Mahommedan town, and himself its chief, and, by making it a refuge for runaway slaves, quickly increased its size.[1]

[1] Abiodun was then King of Oyo and of all Yorubaland.

At Alimi's death, his son, Abdul Salami, assumed the title of First Emir of Ilorin and of all Yoruba, and preached a *jihad*, the result of which was that, in a very short time, the whole country as far as Otta and Ijebu was overrun by Mahommedan fanatics. Abdul Salami sat on the throne for nine years, and was succeeded by his brother Sitta, whose reign of eighteen years was chiefly remarkable for attempts on the part of the Yorubas to drive the hated Fulas from the country. About the year 1840, the Yorubas sought the assistance of the Borgus, who accordingly sent a small contingent to the war. The united forces marched on the town of Ilorin and engaged the Fulas in a desperate fight outside the walls. The battle raged for many hours, the Fula army suffering immense loss, and being forced to retire on their town for a final stand. In the moment of victory, however, the Borgu war-chief, Ikoko,[1] fell dead, and a panic seized the pagan forces; the Mahommedans saw their opportunity, and, issuing from the town, completely routed their foes.[2]

In spite of this victory, Sitta had the misfortune, before his death,[3] to see the gradual crumbling away of his extensive kingdom, for the Yorubas, headed by the Ibadans. set to work to purchase fire-arms from the traders on the coast about Lagos, and soon drove their conquerors back to their present boundary.

After Sitta, Zobeiru, son of Abdul Salami, reigned for eight years, and was followed, in 1867, by the present emir, Alihu, the son of Sitta. In the early years of Alihu's

[1] Also known as Orukura.

[2] Amongst the prisoners taken on this occasion was a pagan priestess or fetish woman, whom the Fulas treated with great respect, keeping her at the court of Ilorin and bestowing on her the title of Kakanfo, or war-chief. This woman was still living when we visited Ilorin, and her influence is so great that she virtually rules the kingdom.

[3] Sitta died about 1858.

reign,[1] one of his war-chiefs, Nokomi, raised a rebellion which was, however, speedily crushed, the ringleader being strangled in public at Ilorin. In the latter half of the reign an uninterrupted war has been carried on with the Ibadans, which we found still in progress on our arrival in the country.

We experienced great difficulty at Shonga in procuring a sufficient number of carriers to accompany us to Ilorin. It appears we had arrived at a somewhat inopportune moment, for the Niger Company had recently sent up a large supply of salt to their factory, and this was now being conveyed away, by the native traders, to the markets of the interior. We required for our journey between eighty and ninety carriers, a number which at first sight may appear enormous, but, on consideration of the nature of African travel, it will be seen to be none too large. In the first place, we were taking £150 worth of valuable presents from the British Government to the chiefs of the country; and, further, all money for defraying the cost of food and other necessaries had to be carried in the shape of bags of cowries and salt, and bales of Manchester goods. By beating up all the neighbouring farms and villages, we were at length able to set our caravan in motion on the 26th September.

We landed early in the morning, and, having assembled the carriers in the factory-yard, distributed their loads and started them off, intending to follow a little later, when, just as we were mounting our horses, there rode into the yard an insolent-looking Fula, attended by a ruffianly crew of followers, who demanded an audience of the Commissioner, saying that he was the Shiaba's son and that with him were other chiefs who were desirous of seeing the Queen's man on a matter of some importance. The Major informed the

[1] Since writing the above, news has reached England of the death (in August 1891) of Alihu, Momo succeeding him.

Nupe nobleman that he was very pleased to have met him, but that, owing to the lateness of the hour, he must be going, whereupon the prince replied with a laugh, "There is no particular hurry, for I have ordered all your carriers to return, since you have not given me the customary presents. I am the chief of the town of Shonga, and your carriers are my subjects, therefore, until you have presented me and the other princes with what we deem a proper amount of goods, your carriers do not leave Shonga." This was too much for any one to stand, especially when we had already made a considerable number of presents to various chiefs in the town, so the Commissioner, being mortal and also British, allowed his anger full freedom and poured down volley after volley of abuse on the heads of the astonished natives. A heated discussion lasted for some time, the princes being obdurate in their demands, and the Commissioner continuing to threaten them with the direst vengeance for their impertinence in interfering with a British envoy.

After about half-an-hour of high words, the Fulas got tired of arguing with a person who refused to listen to them, and having consulted among themselves, the Shiaba's son came forward and offered his hand to the Commissioner with the most abject apologies. So ended this little incident, which had delayed our movements by a couple of hours or so; but why the Fulas apologised we never discovered, and, for some time, we were rather suspicious of their intentions towards us. Had they only known it, and remained firm, we should have been obliged to disgorge the presents they demanded, or abandon our journey.

We[1] left the factory at 2 P.M., and, riding through a

[1] Our party mustered 101 all told. Mr. Watts, the English agent at Egga, and an excellent Nupe scholar, accompanied us in charge of the transport; the Rev. C. Paul, native of Yoruba, undertook the duties of interpreter; Al Heri, a Nupe Mahommedan, head butler; whilst the energetic Samson had

portion of the smaller town, entered the larger one, which is of some size, walled round, and having clean streets and large open market-places. Leaving this, we passed into a well-cultivated country, the sandy path lying through fields of lofty millet, waving high above our heads, even on horseback as we were. Soon after four o'clock, we reached our halting-place for the night—the small village of Idomaji—half-a-dozen of whose little circular huts were handed over to us to sleep in. These mud huts, which are about ten feet in diameter, are comfortable enough when clean, but they have two serious drawbacks—they are seldom water-tight, and, in hot weather, they are terribly stuffy, one low doorway being the only opening.

At 6 A.M. next day we were in the saddle. The road, which is a mere track two feet wide, takes us through a pleasant, undulating country; patches of cultivation alternate with stretches of high grass, and shady trees are scattered about in abundance. The country at this season is deluged by the rain, our pathway in places being knee deep in water, though, later in the day, we get into a higher and a drier state of affairs, where the familiar white ant is conspicuous by his presence, raising his enormous mounds to a height of fifteen to twenty feet, and devouring everything that he comes across in the way of dead or decaying vegetation. To this insignificant little insect is due, no doubt, the credit of fertilising the arid soil during the long dry months of the year, assisting, if not entirely supplanting here, our wriggling friend, the earthworm. We halted for breakfast in a quiet grove by the edge of a swollen rivulet, where, seated on a fallen tree, we watched the never-ending stream

now been converted from a skinner of birds into a collector of butterflies, for, owing to the pace we were to travel, we were forced to give up bird collecting during the land journey. The rest of the caravan consisted of servants, horse-boys, and carriers, representatives of many West African tribes, and, for the most part, scoundrels.

of slave women bearing the farm produce, in calabashes on their heads, to their masters' dwellings in the villages. These poor toilers have a hard life indeed—abroad all day, and busy half the night preparing food for themselves and their belongings. They seem contented, however, singing as they move along, and resting occasionally to take their babies from their backs. The little infants suffer severely from exposure, being strapped in a shawl when a few days old to their mother's waist, and their heads unprotected from the powerful sun, small wonder that the majority of them perish before they have been long in the world. Shortly after noon, we passed through a narrow gateway in a low mud wall and entered Saraji,[1] the border town of Nupe. The place is divided into two parts, the one inhabited by Nupes, the other by Yorubas. Two chiefs also share the government, though the Yorubas are here more or less on sufferance. Our arrival created immense excitement, the natives lining the road in dense throngs, for few white men have hitherto visited this part of the country. As we rode along between the two walls of excited but orderly negroes, we were met by the professional drummers and musicians of the town, who preceded us to our quarters, creating the most deafening noise imaginable.[2] Accommodation was found for us at the house of the Yoruba chief's son, Daudu, an intelligent and pleasant Mahommedan,

[1] Sometimes called Saraki. It is said to contain 50,000 inhabitants, but I should say this is above the mark.

[2] The sounds produced by the instruments, and more especially by the drums, are to European ears quaint in the extreme, though, from all accounts, they form almost a second language to the natives. Sir A. Moloney, late Governor of Lagos, says, "A Yoruba goes so far as to consider that his language is sufficiently musical to be easily imitated instrumentally, and accordingly to allow a player through his instrument to convey his thoughts without having recourse to words. Such a practice is often referred to as the drum language, viz., the imitation of the human voice of the drum ; and, to understand it, one has to know the accents of pronunciation in the vernacular and to be capable of recognising the different and corresponding notes of the drum."—*Proceedings of the R. G. S.*, vol. xii., 1890, p. 609.

who seemed greatly honoured at having us for his guests. Our host's residence, situated in the middle of Saraji, is a good specimen of a Yoruba house. In plan it somewhat resembles an Indian serai, or the outbuildings of an English farm-yard, the outer mud wall which encloses the quadrangle being also the main wall of the building. Entering by the single gateway, we find ourselves in a yard, some 200 feet square, opening into which are the thatched verandahs of the building. Passing through the verandah, we come to the dwelling-rooms, which are numerous, dark, and small; while, in the centre of the courtyard, stand half-a-dozen little conical granaries, wherein is safely stowed the produce of the outlying farms. The Major was lodged in the guest-chamber, a small room adjoining the host's apartments, and I in a half-open verandah on the other side of the yard, where I was separated by merely a low wall from a whole African family, who amused themselves by watching my movements for the rest of the day. At first, half-a-dozen pairs of ever-gazing eyes rather disconcert one; but, after a while, one gets used to them and hardly notices their presence at all. All the afternoon the gateway of our residence was besieged by people wishing to get a sight of the white men, but the only person admitted was the town-crier, who was allowed in for ten minutes to shout our praises. This the worthy gentleman did until he was hoarse, when he betook himself to a cow's horn, out of which he produced a noise worse, if possible, than his own voice. We silenced the horn by buying it, and its owner we sent away rejoicing with a present of a piece of cloth. In the evening we thought we would stroll through the town and walk to the top of some low hills which overlook the place on one side. We had not gone far, however, when a messenger arrived from the war-chief (or *chef-de-police*), asking why we wanted to walk about the town. He said

it was not customary for strangers to go wandering about, and begged us to return home. Accordingly, not wishing to do anything that was not quite correct, we curtailed our walk, and contented ourselves by snapping at the crowd which followed us with the hand-camera, about which, at any rate, there could not be any question of custom.

Our dinner took place in an open verandah, and the natives were permitted to view the performance, being arranged by our landlord in a semi-circle a few yards from us. Children were seated on the ground in the front row, women with babies had the next place of honour, and, at the back, the remainder of the crowd stood about as they pleased. The interest taken by the spectators in all our movements was quite equal to that of a first-night audience at a Strand theatre. Murmurs of applause greeted the carving of a chicken, drawing a cork nearly put the whole community to flight, while the striking of matches to light our pipes was received with about the same amount of enthusiasm as the grand final display at the Crystal Palace fireworks; but, after all, if matters were reversed, and three Saraji gentlemen pitched their camp on the steps of the National Gallery, I fancy there would be no small excitement among the Londoners to watch them feed. After dinner came the professional musicians and dancing people to entertain us, and continued to beat drums for our edification for a couple of hours. Their dancing is of the feeblest description, and far inferior to the slowest of Indian nautches; the only performers were men, who came forward singly and did a ridiculous kind of heel-and-toe breakdown without any variation, each man dancing till he was out of breath, when his place was taken by another, who went through the same dull antics. As the hours grew later, the town appeared to awaken, and, going outside our yard, we saw groups of people dancing and singing, and enjoying

themselves to their heart's content. The night-market was in full swing under the trees, and sounds of revelry reached us from the neighbouring houses; muskets were occasionally discharged, and bands of men and boys were moving about the town, dressed in strange clothes and wearing grotesque masks. We watched from a distance a bevy of young girls engaged in a dance, which to us appeared as unentertaining as that indulged in by the men. A party of these maidens stood in a circle watching, with beaming faces, the performance of one of their number, who was executing a *pas seul* in the centre. Every now and then the circle closed in and opened out again, the girls clapping their hands the while; the steps of the *danseuse* became quicker and quicker, till at last, with a final spin and a jump, she fell into the arms of her companions. This was repeated again and again by different girls, some with greater skill than others, but none displaying much grace—"the poetry of motion" is not here.

Our cavalcade passed through the market-place shortly after sunrise the following day, hundreds of people witnessing our departure. The Nupe portion of the town is entirely different to the Yoruba, the huts in the former being neat, clean-looking, and circular in shape, while the dwellings in the latter have the most ramshackle appearance, and consist of a number of badly thatched sheds bundled up together anyhow. Crossing a deep ravine in the middle of the town, whence the inhabitants obtain their water, and passing through the southern gateway, we soon get into a fine open country, covered with grass, eight feet or more in height, and well wooded in places. For some miles our bridle-path lies ankle deep in water, making our progress slow; but, by ten o'clock, we reach a dry and well-shaded spot by the side of a mountain stream, where a halt is made for breakfast. The inhabitants of a farm close by soon

discover our presence, and in less than no time set up a regular bazaar for the sale of hot pounded yam and ground-nuts, where our carriers, by the payment of about a half-penny apiece, obtain as much food as they can eat. Provisions are cheap in these parts, and famine and starvation unknown in the land. From our resting-place, the track took us over a range of wooded hills, and then for some hours, through low swampy ground, intersected by occasional deep watercourses. Little farms, surrounded by fields of corn and yams, are passed every here and there, looking peaceful and flourishing, for we are now well in the Yoruba country, whose inhabitants are not subjected to Mahommedan oppression, such as the miserable Nupes are forced to endure.

Just as the sun was disappearing behind the hills, we entered Iporin,[1] where we found our advanced guard of carriers sitting disconsolate under some trees, a little within the town. They said it was quite impossible to find accommodation in the place as it was market-day, and every available shed was occupied by the country people, who had come in from the farms. However, after some discussion with the chief of the town, some houses were cleared for us, and we managed to make ourselves tolerably comfortable for the night. The market-place was densely packed with thousands of people, to the majority of whom the sight of white men was a novelty indeed, since for five-and-twenty years no European had passed this way. As we rode along, marketing was abandoned, buyers and sellers tore towards us, overturning their goods in their excitement, and stood in open-mouthed wonder. Remarks about us were made freely and aloud—"Look at their hats;" "What extraordinary clothes;" "Did you ever see such noses as they have got? and their hair, why it's quite straight and as

[1] Or Eponing.

yellow as palm-oil," and such like simple expressions of astonishment met our ears. But, at any rate, we were not objects of horror to them, for more than one old woman brought her children to look at us, telling them that we had come from heaven.

Iporin[1] is situated on undulating ground close to the banks of a deep, though insignificant, stream. It belongs entirely to Yoruba, and, like all Yoruba towns, though clean, has the appearance of being sadly in want of repair. The country around is well cultivated for many miles, and numerous farms are seen in the distance. The inhabitants are a happy, peaceful lot, spending their days in agricultural pursuits, and the greater part of their nights in amusement. We had had a long day's ride in the heat of the sun, and the Major was suffering from an attack of fever; but, much as we needed it, it was impossible, from the continued noise, to get any rest until near midnight, and even then the heavy rain, which fell almost all night, made matters not too pleasant by dripping on us through the sieve-like roofs.

We left Iporin at 6.30 in the morning, and, after an hour and a half's ride through a fertile country, reached the river Otshi. The people we met along the road were always extremely polite, kneeling down as we passed, and saluting us, in Yoruba, with "Oku! Oku!"; and one child, walking alone, calabash on head, knelt by the path and sang, in a low, soft voice, a really melodious little morning hymn by way of greeting, which quite captivated us.

The Otshi River,[2] where we struck it, flows almost north and south, through banks thickly fringed with large trees. At this season it is about sixty yards wide with a very swift current, and, as there were only two canoes at the ferry, it

[1] Population about 15,000; Mahommedan and heathen in about equal numbers.

[2] The Otshi, which is not navigable, even for small launches, falls into the Kworra at a place called Jeba, about fifteen miles above Rabba.

took our party nearly two hours to cross. The canoes were managed most dexterously by their owners, everything being done with poles. A vigorous shove-off from the bank carried the canoe into the stream, when the ferryman, thrusting his pole quickly into the river below his little craft, sent it spinning round, and a parting push landed it on the opposite side a little lower down. The crossing was not altogether without excitement, for, during the spinning process, the water lapped over the gunwales in rather an unpleasant way, giving one the idea that it would not take very much to swamp the whole concern. The horses had to swim over, and gave a good deal of trouble, refusing to take to the water for ever so long. The native method of swimming them, too, seems a poor one, and looks none too safe for the horse-boy. This individual enters the water with the halter-rope in his teeth, and swims ahead of his charge in dangerous proximity, it appeared to me, to his hoofs, a plan quite contrary to our notions.

We breakfasted at the village on the river bank, and, in order to give our carriers a good start, pottered about collecting butterflies, numbers of which were constantly flitting about our path; our henchman, Samson, carefully stowing them away in little paper packets as they were captured. From the Otshi, we had a long and hot ride of six hours, across an open tract of country, passing numbers of wayside farms and small villages, which caused us endless delay with the carriers, these loiterers halting whenever possible to fill themselves up with hot yams, and requiring to be driven forward again by strong language. Late in the afternoon, we were foolish enough to leave our carriers at the village of Akayo and ride on to the ferry over the Maya River,[1] which we reached at sunset.

[1] The Maya is a tributary of the Otshi, and, though not so deep, is far wider than the latter. Its banks are low, and covered with cultivation in the shape of Guinea corn and sugar-cane.

The river was about a hundred yards wide, and there was but one canoe at the ferry, consequently taking across even the few carriers who came on from Akayo was a lengthy operation, and not concluded till almost dark. The horse-boys were behind, stuffing themselves at the village, so we had to get our horses over as best we could. They objected to swimming behind the canoe, and we thought we should have to swim them across ourselves; but, fortunately, a small boy, called Charabadu, whom we had engaged in the Benue, came to the front and took over all five horses, one after another, covering himself with glory.[1] From the river the country slopes gently up for about a mile, where, on a well-cultivated ridge, stands Kalende farm, our halting-place for the night. All the *wrong* carriers came up—the cooking things were behind, so was my bed, while such things as bags of cowries and bundles of cloth turned up in abundance. The Major was more fortunate than I, his servant taking care to drive his master's bed ahead of him, so, after a supper, chiefly of sardines, he turned in snug under the mosquito curtains, and I proceeded to make up a couch out of numerous bundles of Manchester goods. Sleep, however, I could not, for it was impossible to keep away the myriads of mosquitoes and sandflies which swarmed round me, and I was therefore driven out of doors, to spend my night in pacing up and down the yard, gaining what consolation I could from tobacco.

The absent carriers came in early next morning, each one with a different excuse—one said that the spirit of his dead father forbade him to travel after dark, another that the road was frequented by leopards and therefore unsafe, a

[1] It may be of interest to future travellers to mention what we paid for the conveyance of our party across the Otshi and Maya. The total amount came to £1, 15s. 1d., which was paid thus: 11¾ yards French stripes, 1 piece blue bronze cloth, 12 yards marble cloth, 10 yards fancy prints, 1 piece common print, and 4 "heads" of cowries.

third that sleep had overcome him, and so on; they were, however, spoken to in a fatherly manner by the Commissioner, and told that, on reaching Ilorin, they would be dismissed.

From our quarters we obtained a good view of Ilorin, lying almost hidden among trees, about three miles away. The Emir's messenger arrived at about ten o'clock, bearing kola nuts and words of welcome from his sovereign, and under his guidance we started off for the capital. Crossing the Asa River [1] in canoes, we rode up a glacis-like slope for about a mile to the walls of the city, which are roughly-built of mud, some six feet in height and a few inches thick. Entering the place a little before noon, by the northern gateway, we were conducted through narrow and dirty streets for a mile or so to a small courtyard, a dense crowd following us in gaping astonishment. Here we remained for some time, while our guide went to look for quarters for us. The news of our arrival soon got abroad, and in consequence we were treated much in the same way as the people of an English country town treat a travelling menagerie. After a while, we were informed that no other accommodation could be found for us than the courtyard in which we were seated; however, the Commissioner sent word to the Emir that he was not being treated with the dignity befitting his position, whereupon the head messenger of the court [2] appeared on the scene, arrayed in a handsome yellow tobe, and made ample apologies for the conduct of our former guide, saying that we should soon be lodged in a comfortable house. He then took us to the Chief of the Executioners, a benevolent-looking old gentleman, whom we

[1] The Asa flows round two sides of Ilorin, and eventually joins the Otshi; in the wet season it is about 150 yards wide, and where we crossed it, there are two ferries about half-a-mile apart.

[2] The Emir's welcome was of the most complimentary nature, and accompanied by a present of a sheep, kola nuts, and many slave-loads of yams.

found seated half out of a low doorway, and who received us with much politeness, repeating the words *Oku* and *Sannu* at short intervals for some ten minutes. Having concluded his salutations, he informed us that we had been handed over to him by the Emir, not with any object of giving him practice in his vocation, but to be his guests, and that a house was now being prepared for us. After a delay of about another half-hour, during which we sat on view to all who cared to have a look, we were told that our house was ready, and accordingly we moved off to it.

Our quarters proved to be small, and not over clean, but possessing at any rate the great advantage of privacy, so we considered ourselves fortunate. The house belongs to our friend, the chief wielder of the sword of execution, and is constructed on the usual rambling principle of Yoruba dwellings. Leaving the street, and entering a wide gateway in the wall which encloses the whole residence, we are taken up a narrow passage, on either side of which runs a row of sheds, the far end of the passage being closed by a door, barring the way to our new home, The door opens into a little shed which forms our kitchen; beyond lies a courtyard, ten feet wide by thirty long; around this are our rooms, the largest being twelve feet by four and seven feet in height. Doorways communicate with the yard and others with the inner chambers, which are dark and devoid of all ventilation. The roof is of thatch, economically put on, and admits in places daylight, and on occasions rain, generally dirt, and always smells. In the courtyard stands a row of huge earthenware vats for water, and from one corner a doorway leads into a tiny garden, shut off from the street by an eight-foot wall.

During the afternoon we showed ourselves occasionally outside the house, in order to accustom the people to our presence. We walked through the market-place, and in

doing so gathered round us a crowd of hundreds of boys and adults, good-natured and evidently much interested, though apparently unable to make us out—were we devils let loose amongst them, or what? When we halted and turned round, the crowd, terror-striken, fled on all sides, upsetting, in their disorder, the stalls of the market-women, quickly reassembling, however, as we moved on. It is amusing at first, but becomes terribly monotonous after a time. One feels like a wild beast regularly hunted down; and, after short excursions into the town, we return to our sanctuary, with hearts filled with gratitude towards our host, the executioner.

The city of Ilorin is a disappointment in more ways than one. We had heard the place described as the Mecca of West Africa—of immense size, possessing fine buildings, wide streets, magnificent mosques, and handsomely clothed inhabitants. What we find to-day is a town, certainly of considerable size, but in appearance not to be compared with Bida and Yola. The buildings are dilapidated-looking erections, irregularly roofed with palm fronds and untidy thatch; the streets are filthy and unsanitary; the mosques are mere barns; and the people are decidedly the dirtiest Mahommedans I have encountered anywhere in the world. In certain parts of the town there are fine open spaces, well shaded by trees, where markets are held; and, in some of the compounds, gardens have been attempted, and acacias and bamboos planted, but, on the whole, Ilorin has few charms.

At dawn, the cry of the *muezzin*, summoning the faithful to prayer, reminded us that we were in a Mahommedan town; and, shortly afterwards, we were gazing over our garden wall at the people hurrying to mosque, though the attendance does not seem quite as large as one might expect in a town of this size. The fact is that Islamism, though nominally the

religion of the country, has no great hold on the inhabitants. The descendants of the original Fula invaders are, of course, devout followers of the Prophet, but the majority of the people merely profess Mahommedanism from necessity, and are, in reality, heathens.

Mr. Paul spent most of the afternoon of the 30th September in making arrangements with the court officials for the Commissioner's reception by the Emir, in open durbar, next morning. Great pressure had to be brought on the sovereign to receive us so soon, for the usual custom is for strangers to remain in the town for some days prior to obtaining an audience, the time being spent in the interchange of complimentary messages and trifling presents.

Outside our house was an open space, on the far side of which stood the long high wall of the palace, entered by a single and solid-looking gateway. Thither, at 8 A.M., dressed in full military uniform, we repaired. At the gate the chief executioner received us, and, leading the way to a shady spot in the outer courtyard, begged us to wait a little while with patience, as all the important persons of the country had been summoned to meet us, and many were still absent. We were treated with the greatest courtesy by the royal attendants, who formed a cordon round us, to keep back the crowd, and frequently assured us that we should not have long to wait. In an hour or so the head messenger arrived, and told us that all was ready, and that the Emir awaited us; so, following him, we entered the inner courtyard, where, ranged round the wall, stand the dwellings of the royal household, having the appearance of a huge oriental caravanserai. The Emir's private apartments face the entrance, and, in front of them, we found that a large open-sided mat-shed had been put up, to shelter the assembly of chiefs from sun and rain. As we passed up the centre of the shed, to the verandah of the

Emir's house, a murmur ran through the vast gathering of chieftains, who were seated in orderly rows on the ground for some distance around.

The Emir, Alihu, received us sitting in a low doorway,[1] and, shaking us warmly by the hands, motioned us to a seat on some mats opposite him. The customary salutations[2] were of a more lengthy nature than usual, and, though possessed of little variety, took considerable time to get through. The Emir is a stout and pleasant-looking man of about forty-five years of age, his features being of the true negro type, and having none of the refinement of the Fula. He seemed to be intelligent and much interested in us, asking numerous questions about our country, and more particularly about the Royal Family. On being told that the Queen had reigned for over fifty years, he said that it was incredible that one person should govern for so long a time without enemies arising to plot against her life.

The Commissioner, after a short and friendly conversation, proceeded to disclose the object of his visit, first causing his commission to be read aloud in the Yoruba language, which brought forth murmurs of applause from the assembly, then, in order to further strengthen his hand, he produced his *firman* as officer of the fourth class of the Osmanieh Order, which was handed for the inspection of the Emir and the Imam, or high priest, and received by them with the greatest reverence. The Emir stated that he considered the *firman* most sacred, since it bore the signature of the

[1] The doorway faced the assemblage, and was three feet high, the Emir sitting cross-legged on the threshold. This appears to be the official mode of reception in these parts, though what the object of the little doorway is I know not, unless it be to enable His Majesty to effect a dignified retreat in case of an assault being attempted on him by his visitor.

[2] The salutations consisted merely of six words, repeated over and over again by both parties alternately for the space of a quarter of an hour, the words (all signifying "how d'ye do?") were *óku* (Yoruba), *marhába*, *sannu*, *barkah*, and *láfia* (Hausa), and *walejama* (Fula).

Sultan of Stamboul—the head of his religion—asking for it a second time, and bowing his head to the ground, he pressed the paper to his forehead with much solemnity.

The chiefs appeared quite amazed when they heard of the disinterested action of Her Majesty in despatching a special envoy to such a distance for the sole purpose of bringing about peace between two foreign countries, and the Emir declared that he and his people had for years desired to settle down quietly in their homes, but that the Ibadans were constantly crossing the Ilorin frontier, and placing the capital in danger, under which circumstances he was obliged to keep his army on the frontier to defend the country. Waxing warm as his speech progressed, Alihu drew our attention to a six-inch parapet which surrounded the outer edge of his verandah, and said, "In this season, when it pleases the Great Allah to send forth the rains from heaven, my house is in danger of being flooded by the waters. To preserve my goods from this foe, I have placed yon small defence at the frontier of my dwelling; so it is and has been for the past twelve years with my country. The chief of the Ibadans has continued to pour down his forces upon us, and has endeavoured to flood out my people from their homes. To prevent, therefore, this living wave reaching the capital, I am obliged to erect a barrier on the borders of the land, even at my war-camp at Ofa. The Ibadans are now at Ikirun, six days' journey from their capital; my army is but two from here—consider, therefore, which of us two is the aggressor." The speech from the throne lasted for some time, being listened to with wrapt attention by all present, the silence of the assembly being only broken when His Majesty cleared his throat, on which occasions every one shouted "Allah" in chorus. The Commissioner, having heard what the chief priest and other high officials of the court had to say on the subject, inquired if the Emir was

willing to give his consent, as head of the Ilorin people, to a treaty of peace being made between his country and Ibadan. He replied that he himself would be only too thankful for peace, and would agree to anything that was honourable to himself and his people, but that, without the knowledge of his war-chiefs, he was unable to move in the matter. It was then suggested that he should summon them from the camp to Ilorin, when their opinion could be taken. He acknowledged that this would be an excellent plan, except for the fact that, in all probability, they would refuse to come—an answer which rather betrayed his lack of power. The Commissioner, being already much weakened by fever, did not feel at all inclined to make a further journey of forty miles or so, to interview the minor chiefs of the country, but the Emir made such a point of the importance of a white man visiting the camp, that at length it was agreed that I should proceed thither the following morning, the Emir promising to send forward a messenger to warn the war-chiefs to be prepared to receive me. Then, after a little friendly talk, chiefly about the claymore and dirks which formed a part of the Major's Highland uniform, we took our departure, glad indeed to regain our humble dwelling and discard our tight-fitting tunics.

Mr. Paul, later in the day, conveyed the bulk of the presents [1] to the royal quarters, and returned with the most profuse thanks from the Emir and his head officials. What pleased them most seems to have been a musical box, which they had never heard before; but they were duly impressed with the beauty of some of the embroideries, though I fancy that they were in reality far too handsome to be of any real value, since these people are, as yet, wholly unacquainted

[1] In the Appendix will be found a complete list of the presents bestowed on the chiefs of Ilorin, as well as an account of the expenses of the journey, which I have thought may be of value as a guide to future travellers.

with the extravagant magnificence which one sees in the courts of Eastern Mahommedans. The importance of being adequately provided with presents in these countries cannot be overestimated, for, without the wherewithal to "square" the chiefs, it is impossible to travel. Doubtless the Emir would have preferred a large gift of salt and country-cloth, as representing money; but it is best for a duly-accredited British envoy to be the bearer of articles out of the common, so as to impress on the recipients the difference between a Government servant and a trader. In our own case, the people of Ilorin, imagining that all white men are merchants, at first got it into their heads that we had come to their capital to make a commercial treaty and to open a large business for the purchase of shea butter, and this notion was only dispelled with difficulty.

CHAPTER X.

ILORIN (*continued*).

DURING the short time we had been at Ilorin, our agents had been at work, trying to discover privately the actual wishes of the people with regard to our mission, and it appeared to us that undoubtedly the masses were desirous of peace, but that there existed among the Fula aristocracy a spark of their old warlike spirit, which, though burning dimly, was fanned by Karara, the Commander-in-chief at the Ofa war camp. The Emir also, from all accounts, was not wholly irresponsible for the existing state of affairs, for between himself and Karara there were long-time differences and unpleasantnesses, amounting to the most flagrant acts of insubordination on the part of the latter. It was therefore hardly to be wondered at, that the Emir should be only too glad of an excuse to keep his *bête noir* at a distance from his capital, for, in these strange lands, an unpopular sovereign is disposed of by the secret administration of poison, with small compunction. *Post-mortems* are unknown, and dead men tell no tales.

Early on the morning of the 2nd October, my little party left Ilorin, under the guidance of a messenger from the Emir. I took with me, besides Mr. Paul, a Kru servant and fifteen carriers, bearing the necessary presents and provisions for the journey. Quitting the town by the eastern gate, we rode down a well-cultivated slope to the River Asa, which we crossed in canoes, the swiftness of the current carrying

our two horses some distance down-stream, and causing considerable delay. Beyond the Asa, the path takes us through low scrub jungle, and from the summit of a long ridge we look down on a gently-undulating country, about which numerous little farms and villages are seen, one and all apparently in a flourishing condition. Occasionally we meet a few shepherds minding their flocks, but there are hardly any travellers on the road.

At ten o'clock we reached Gamma, a fair-sized village, where I found all the inhabitants assembled in the streets to see me pass, evidently having heard of my coming from the messenger whom the Emir had sent on ahead. While resting for breakfast, under the shade of some trees, a short distance outside the village, a fine-looking young warrior galloped up, with spear in hand, and, flinging himself from his saddle, knelt down in front of me. Then raining down on my head all the blessings of the Prophet, he introduced himself as the son of one Jimba, a war-chief at the Ilorin camp, and owner of a small village a few miles from where we were. He himself, he said, was engaged in the war, and was now on his way to Ilorin on business. Our mission was no secret in the camp, for news had reached them a fortnight since that we were coming to bring about peace, and the chieftains were anxiously awaiting our arrival. This young warrior was evidently, from his bearing, a person of good family, and in manner was courtesy itself; he was, moreover, a dandy, his well-proportioned limbs being clothed in richly-embroidered tobes, while crimson pyjamas, tucked into handsomely-worked long riding-boots, covered his legs. A large straw hat thrown back over his neck, and a straight two-edged sword, hanging from his left shoulder, gave a finish to his picturesque appearance. After a pleasant chat of some length, he mounted his horse—a smart-looking beast, about fifteen hands in height—and, putting his feet

into the ponderous brass stirrups, dug in his spurs, and went as he came—at a hand gallop—reining up once and turning round in his saddle to wave us a last adieu with his gleaming spear.

Continuing our journey, we soon reached the village of Amayu, and found the inhabitants, as usual, ready for us; but I was not a little startled when a good lady rushed from the crowd, and, hanging on to my stirrup, shouted "Damn you! damn you!" in the most friendly way. As the expression in ordinary cases is not indicative of friendship, I inquired from Mr. Paul if this was, by any chance, a variation of the usual Yoruba salutation of "Oku." After conversing with the lady, who was so free with her condemnations, he told me that she had, on several occasions, paid visits, for trading purposes, to one of the stations on the Niger, and she was under the impression that she had made use of the commonest of English greetings. I tried to argue with the worthy and reverend gentleman that such words could never have been heard from English lips, but he seemed to think otherwise, and said that he considered it a sign that British civilisation is, at last, beginning to make some way in Africa.

From Amayu the road lies low, and is much under water, as we descend into the valley of the Otshi river. This river, which we had crossed lower down, a few days before, on our journey from Iporin to Ilorin, here flows between well wooded banks, about fifty yards apart, and is crossed by canoe-ferry. We arrived at the ferry at rather a busy time of day, and, as there was only one canoe, we had to wait a while. A long string of slave women were crossing with their loads, and presented rather an interesting sight. Their servitude is apparently light, for they all seem cheerful enough, but it may be that they know no other form of existence. Though accustomed to cross these rivers daily,

they are evidently much afraid of the passage in the crank little dug-outs, for each party appoints one of their number to sing a hymn during the crossing, for the propitiation of the god of the river; and, as the centre of the stream is reached, her shrill voice echoes again and again through the silent valley. Skirting the village of Oko Jimba,[1] at 3 P.M. we arrived at the large village of Dofian,[2] where we determined to spend the night, to avoid being drenched by a heavy storm which was threatening.

I was fortunate in finding here fairly water-tight quarters under the verandah of a farm-building, and I was scarcely settled when the storm broke, and continued uninterruptedly for hours, rivalling in its intensity the first burst of an Indian monsoon. It had its good points, however, as it saved me the annoyance of being mobbed by the inhabitants. My landlord proved to be a most friendly old Yoruba, who, though he had never seen a European before, unburdened his mind to me with regard to the troubles of the country. He told me that the frontier is distant but fifteen or twenty miles, and that the inhabitants of the village live in constant dread of being raided by the Ibadans. The war, he said, is a farce, as for years there has been no engagement of any size, hostilities merely taking the form of small kidnapping expeditions from both armies. The Ibadans cross the frontier, and lie in ambush along the paths which lead from village to village, and carry off any small parties of farm-labourers who happen to pass unarmed. The Ilorins at the camp, on the other hand, retaliate by despatching similar expeditions into the Ijesha country.

A slight drizzle was still falling as we left our quarters at

[1] *i.e.*, "The farm of Jimba," the owner being the war-chief whose son's acquaintance we had made during the day.

[2] Dofian contains about 1000 inhabitants.

6 A.M. next day to continue the journey. Our host accompanied us a short way, doubtless anxious to let the rest of the villagers know that he had been entertaining the white man. The real object of my visit to Ofa had spread abroad during the night, and, as we rode through the crowd assembled in the market, many expressions of gratitude were bestowed on us; while, at the end of the village, stood a small group of the elders of the place, who shouted after us, in the sing-song Yoruba tongue, "Olorun si waju won" (God go before them). This little incident proved to me that, whatever the feeling in the capital may be, here, in the outlying villages, the people desire to be relieved from this reign of terror. They are afraid to cultivate the land, for they know that, with the ripening of the crops, will come the Ibadan plunderers; they know also that the forces at Ofa are unable to cope with the little bands of mounted raiders, who in a night dash over the border, loot a village, and are back in their camp again before daylight.

Our ride for the first few hours was rather a rough one, the country being much flooded, and several swollen streams having to be negotiated. At about ten o'clock I saw a wild-looking native galloping down on me at full speed, his heels dug into his horse's flanks, and his huge white tobe flowing in the wind. Reining up suddenly a couple of yards from me, the horseman gave me an elaborate military salute, and addressed me in English with "Good morning, sir!" My astonishment at hearing my own language spoken in this remote part of the country can be imagined, but I soon found out that my friend's English vocabulary was somewhat limited. However, he proved of immense service to me later on. He told me his whole history in about ten minutes, smiling blandly between each sentence. His name was Al Haji Abdul Salami, and he was a near relative of Karara, the Commander-in-chief. He had made

the pilgrimage to Mecca, was on the *Day Spring* when she was wrecked above Rabba, and made the overland journey thence, to Lagos and back, with Glover in 1858. He had served twelve years in the Gold Coast Constabulary, and accompanied Glover up the Volta River during the Ashanti War. He was, in fact, a man who had tried his hand at most things, and could turn his hand to anything, one of a class met with in almost every part of the world, who will serve you well for a limited time at a high wage, who will desert you if he sees a better opening for himself, exceedingly clever and excessively cunning. This was the Haji as I read his character, after an acquaintance of a few hours. The Commander-in-chief had selected this adventurer-relative of his to conduct me to the camp, and an excellent guide I found him.

Having despatched a hasty breakfast at the ruins of the old town of Ofa, we hurried on towards the camp, crossing the Je Fasun river by a primitive wooden bridge—the first I had come across in Yorubaland. From the Je Fasun the ground slopes gently up for about half a mile to the walls of the war-camp, the country being open and covered with high grass.

Now came a huge disappointment. I had thought, as I rode along from Ilorin, that I should find a large Fula army encamped on some far-stretching plain, protected by an elaborate system of outposts, bodies of troops being drilled by their war-chiefs, and possibly a pitched battle in progress between the Ilorins and the Ibadans. What I really experienced was very different. The so-called war-camp resembles an ordinary Yoruba town, and there is nothing without or within to distinguish it from such. There are no fortifications, no sentinels, and no sign of war. The place is surrounded by a low mud wall, in very bad repair, and is entered by a narrow gateway, but, except for

this, there appears to be no provision made to resist an enemy's attack.

I entered Ofa[1] about noon, and found it a regular town, laid out with streets and lanes and huts in the usual Yoruba style. Small patches of cultivation surround the houses, and women are busy weaving and grinding corn.[2] As I rode through the main street, followed by an immense crowd of men, women, and children, I was met by the Emir's messenger, who directed me to proceed to the house of the Commander-in-chief's wuzeer (or adjutant-general), by whom I was to be introduced to Karara. I found this worthy holding a levée under a tree outside his dwelling, and, after keeping me waiting for a short while, he came forward, and asked me to dismount and have a talk with him. He was a pleasant old gentleman, with a kind and intelligent face, and, taking me by the hand, he introduced me to each of his friends in turn, and begged me to be seated in their midst. The usual compliments having been concluded, I explained to the wuzeer that my time was valuable, and that I was forced to commence my return journey to Ilorin the same day, and so desired an immediate audience of his great commander. "Impossible," said he; "such a thing cannot be; every one would say that we had shown you no hospitality after your long and tedious journey. Stay with us but seven days; all shall be arranged for your comfort, and you will then have time to transact your business." This did not seem a very hopeful state of affairs, especially when Mr. Paul failed to convince the wuzeer that there was any hurry. However, I managed to

[1] Ikirun, the war-camp of the Ibadans, lies about twenty miles to the south of Ofa. Between the two camps is a plain, on which formerly all the fighting took place. No engagement on a large scale has, however, occurred of late years.

[2] The Yorubas have no corn-mills, but use two large flat stones. On the one is placed a handful of corn, which is crushed into meal by pushing the other backwards and forwards over it.

whisper to Abdul Salami, who was at hand, that, if he could manage matters so that I left Ofa before sunset, he should have a handsome present of salt. This acted like a spell, and our ex-constabulary man commenced to harangue the meeting, putting forward every argument that he could think of. The peculiar ways of white men, he said, he knew well; they were terribly busy people, always in a bustle, and, as he had made the journey himself, he knew how long it would take me to return to the sea by the Niger River. These and other arguments he continued to pour forth with a volubility worthy of a Q.C., and in the end gained his point, the wuzeer agreeing to go and persuade Karara to assemble his war-chiefs at once.

We then went off to the Commander-in-chief's house, which is a large enclosure surrounded by a high wall. On reaching the gate I was informed that they were not ready for me, so I could not enter, but that all the chiefs and people had been summoned and would not be long; in the meanwhile, I was asked to take shelter from the sun in a little lodge-hut close by. I was glad of any excuse to get away from the vast concourse of people who were crowding round me, and to be freed from the deafening banging of drums and shrill piping of whistles which was going on in my honour. The *katamba*, in which I took refuge, was ventilated by two doorways; both, however, were blocked by African bodies, therefore any breath of air which managed to reach me was well impregnated with the odours of the native skin. I had not been here long before I received two visitors; the first—Karara's son—a nice-looking lad, who was most polite, sending off a slave for rugs and mats for me to sit on; the second—a lady—by no means uncomely, as Yorubas go. She told the crowd of sightseers that she had lived some years in Lagos, and considered herself a judge of

white men, and that I was a very fair specimen. She got the piece of cloth she was "playing up" for, and went away happy. After about half-an-hour they came to tell me that I might proceed to Karara's house, which I did, and was admitted by a private door to avoid the crowd.

I had been warned that the Commander-in-chief was at times eccentric in his behaviour, so I was prepared for a good deal; but I did not think that I was going to have dealings with quite such a lunatic as he proved to be. He was seated when I entered the courtyard under a large mat-awning, with his back against the wall, and a crowd of about 1000 chiefs and warriors in several rows in front of him. On the outskirts of this assembly stood the rabble of the town, while three or four native bands kept up an incessant din with their drums and other instruments. Immediately on Karara's right sat the wuzeer, and on the left, engaged in singing the praises of their lord, were three members of the old gentleman's harem, one of whom was an elderly dame, possessed of but one eye, and apparently the *prima donna* of the court. As I walked up between the row of warriors, the women's voices grew louder and shriller, and my interpreter told me that they were improvising some verses about the "arrival of the white peace-maker." I was motioned to a seat on a skin in front of Karara, the women continuing to shriek at the top of their voices, and the tom-toms outside joining in the general confusion. The old chief, who was clothed in a very dirty-white tobe, appeared to be perfectly demented, dancing, smiling, and frowning to the tune of the women's song. Every now and then a man advanced up to him and held out a flat piece of iron, like a fire-shovel, which he smote with a wooden club. This was, to all appearances, the signal that the chief was to cease his fooling, for the

women stopped singing, and Karara became grave for a few minutes.

During one of these intervals I was introduced, and asked by the chief to sit close to him, so that he might converse more easily. He was a man of perhaps sixty-five, with true Fula features, and complexion of a pale yellow colour; his nose was long and hooked and, for an African, thin, while on the point of his chin he wore a scanty white beard, carefully curled. There was a strange wild look in his eyes, but he spoke in a gentle and pleasant way, with a slightly-tremulous voice, which may have been due to the absence of front teeth. He made many apologies for keeping me waiting so long, which he said was all the fault of one of his war-chiefs, who had not yet arrived. After discussing various ordinary topics, he suddenly turned to Mr. Paul and said, "Has the white man got any brandy about him?" and, on receiving an answer in the negative, he became quite dejected, saying that it was most disappointing, as he had always heard that white men carried brandy wherever they went, and he had made up his mind to have a good drink[1] to-day. Then he asked if I were married, but, before I had time to answer, the women tuned up again, and the old man relapsed into imbecility once more. The noise became so deafening that I began to tremble for my own sanity if I remained in this pandemonium much longer, but, fortunately, the fire-shovel man did not permit a very lengthened song.

The conversation was resumed where it was left off, Karara asking how many wives I had in England, and, not knowing for certain that he did not intend to bestow on me the hand of the one-eyed lady, I told Mr. Paul, in desperation, to say that I had one wife and four children.

[1] Karara is said to be a great drunkard, and, some time ago, in a drunken fit, killed one of his war-chiefs.

"Only one wife," said the old gentleman, "why, that is absurd." Further discussion, however, on this somewhat embarrassing subject was luckily cut short by the arrival of the war-chief for whom we had been waiting. When the latter was seated, the Commander-in-chief rose and gave him a bit of his mind for keeping us so long, then, becoming very solemn and turning to me, he said that the time had come for business. Our Ilorin guide was then told to proclaim to the assembly all that had occurred on the occasion of the Commissioner's official reception by the Emir. This concluded, Abdul Salami was called to the front and ordered by Karara to stand up and repeat in a loud voice everything that I said. As I addressed the meeting, Mr. Paul translated each sentence into Yoruba, the haji repeating it aloud, a method which, though slow and irritating at first, has the merit of giving one plenty of time to think of what to say next. I came to the point as quickly as possible, demanding from Karara if he wished to concur in the Emir's desire for peace. He vouchsafed no reply, but asked his generals what they wished. These were all unanimous in their answer, saying that they wanted to get back to their homes at Ilorin, that they were tired of war and would give anything for peace. One old chief bent forward and said to me, "Your queen told you to come here, so you have come; our king told *us* to come here, so *we* have come, but we have been here long enough and the sooner we return to Ilorin the better." Karara then delivered a wild and lengthy speech to his followers, which consisted chiefly of abuse of the Emir. While this was going on, I had a good opportunity of observing the important persons of the camp. There are eleven war-chiefs (or generals), who command the different divisions of the army, and who appear to be a most intelligent set of men. They were well dressed in clean and handsome tobes, and throughout the meeting

chewed kola-nuts incessantly.[1] A little incident, unnoticed by any one else, amused me in a quiet way during Karara's address. A small scorpion wandered down the wall, close to his head, and as we had been informed, before commencing our travels, that the old warrior of Ilorin had a "bee in his bonnet," I was brutal enough to speculate in my mind as to whether the bee would be able to hold the bonnet against the scorpion; my speculations were, however, brought to a sudden close by Karara rising from his seat in the excitement of his harangue.

The meeting came to a satisfactory conclusion by the declarations of Karara and his people that their sole desire was for peace, and the terms of the treaty they left in the hands of their Emir, having heard which, I shook hands all round, and the assembly broke up.

I returned from the durbar with the wuzeer, who asked me to rest in his house before starting on my journey. Here I was given a private courtyard, where I unpacked the presents which I had brought for the chiefs of the camp, and had them put up in separate bundles. Then, leaving Mr. Paul and Abdul Salami to take them to Karara and his chiefs, I rode off, bearing in my hand a spear which had been given to me by one of the warriors.

[1] This habit, as well as the even dirtier one of chewing snuff and potash, is common all over Yorubaland. Doubtless tobacco-chewing in England is quite as filthy, but the Yorubas make matters worse by continually thrusting out the tongue, covered with a huge cake of chewed stuff, and leaving it out for some time to cool, which, to our eyes, is not altogether pleasant.

[2] Ofa camp contains about 7000 inhabitants, of whom not more than 2000 are fighting men, 800 horsemen armed with spears and swords, and the remainder infantry, armed with muskets (Dane or trade guns) and bows and arrows. Karara also possesses twenty-eight Snider rifles, but no ammunition. The men are not trained in any particular mode of fighting, have no drill, and merely follow their leader in mob formation. The Ibadans, from all accounts, are stronger than the Ilorins, and have about 300 modern rifles (with ammunition), but are untrained in the use of such weapons. The Ilorins hold their own solely with their mounted men, who far outnumber those of the Ibadans.

We had not gone far when we met a man on foot running, as if the whole Ibadan army were at his heels. Seizing my stirrup, he begged for protection, saying that he had been on his way from Ofa to a neighbouring village, with three members of his family, and when they reached a spot about a mile further along the road, suddenly a party of Ibadan horsemen issued from the high grass and carried off his family, he himself only escaping by plunging into the grass and concealing himself in a pool of water. He now asked to be allowed to accompany us to Amadu's farm, where we intended to spend the night. I inquired from the refugee, as he walked by my horse's side, if he thought he would ever see his relatives again, and he replied that he was quite sure that he never would, as they would be taken away as slaves to the countries in the south; but he seemed quite cheerful about it, and apparently could give his mind to nothing but his own miraculous escape.

A little before dark we reached Oko Amadu, having had two hours' ride in a heavy thunderstorm; and, after some delay, found quarters for the night in a newly-built farm-building. Mr. Paul made his appearance about three hours later, accompanied by the haji driving a bullock, and two men carrying a quantity of yams, sent to me as a present by Karara. The bullock was a small one, and, moreover, rather lame, so I handed him over to the carriers to make their supper off, after their hard day's work.

Six hours' fast going on the 4th landed us at the capital. It was an interesting ride, by a somewhat different route [1] to that which we had taken previously, and Abdul Salami, who during the night had somehow become possessed of an excellent horse, constituted himself our guide.

Paganism seems to have a strong hold on these outlying

[1] The villages on or near the route were Ya-Okale, Elerinjare, Oko-Iya, Reke, Ologundiroko (a large village), and Abayawo.

villages, and fetish-houses are seen in many of them. Sango, the god of thunder and lightning, is worshipped by a certain number of the people, who distinguish themselves by wearing a single string of white seed beads round the throat. They consider thunderbolts the most sacred things on earth, since they have been sent to them by their god; they smear them with palm oil and blood, and propitiate them with offerings of various kinds. Other Yorubas [1] are extremely superstitious about the powers of Sango worshippers, imagining that they are able, by a simple process, to direct lightning to any spot they may desire. According to my friend the haji, the Sango worshipper watches where lightning or a thunderbolt strikes the ground, and then gathers up the earth from the spot. A little of this, sprinkled on a house, attracts the lightning during the next storm, and ensures the destruction of the house and its occupants.

During our ride we saw no signs of big game whatever, though often passing through magnificent park-like country, where one would imagine that antelope would be fairly numerous. Hyænas and leopards are said to be common, doing considerable damage among the flocks of the villagers, and outside most of the villages are seen traps for catching these depredators. A low mud hut is constructed with a small opening, over which is suspended a falling wooden door, a kid is secured within as a bait, and the door drops by a simple arrangement of rope and sticks.

On entering Ilorin early in the afternoon, I was much gratified at the genial way every one seemed to greet me, and evidently the townspeople were aware of the errand

[1] Abdul Salami, in spite of his pilgrimage to Mecca, told me that he firmly believes in the powers of these heathens. But I was a little astonished when Mr. Paul said that, although not superstitious, he thought that these people had some hypnotic or secret power over other persons. I may mention here that Mr. Paul believes in the existence of the unicorn in West Africa, and on one occasion he brought me the horn of an oryx, which he gravely asserted to be that of the beast in question.

I had been on. Just within the gates, I passed a weaver's house, where a number of men were seated at work by the side of the street; they ceased weaving as I went by, and clinked their shuttles together as a salutation, at the same time singing a kind of hymn of praise. A little further on a smithy was met with, where the half-dozen blacksmiths greeted me with a regular anvil-chorus. As it was Friday, we encountered numbers of the aristocracy of the town returning from mosque, riding gaily-caparisoned horses and dressed in their best. Abdul Salami appeared to be on intimate terms with most of these individuals, and it was amusing to see the *town* manners which he assumed for the occasion. The meetings between himself and his friends, too, were interesting to watch; on recognising each other, at a distance of about fifty yards, both parties would dig in their spurs and gallop at each other, reining up sharp and waving their right fists above their heads when close together, then draw up near each other and exchange the stock Yoruba greetings.

When I reached our little sanctum I found that the Major had just returned from an official visit to the mosque, having taken part in the state procession. He had sent word in the morning to the Emir that he would like to accompany him to the mid-day prayers, and, at two o'clock, a messenger arrived, saying that the procession was just leaving the palace, so the Major rode off to join it. A number of men on foot, armed with flintlocks, moved ahead, then followed a crowd of gaily-dressed chieftains, mounted and carrying spears, and then the Emir himself, perched on a saddle piled up with native rugs, and attended by an immense body-guard of functionaries on foot, amongst whom the royal fan-bearers were conspicuous, their duty apparently being to jump up at intervals and make dabs at their sovereign's face with their small ostrich-feather fans.

Arrived at the gateway of the mosque, the party halted, and the horsemen dismounted, the Emir being carefully lifted off his little steed. There were about 2000 persons assembled outside the building (which was of the ordinary dilapidated Yoruba appearance), and, on the Emir's shaking the Major by the hand, a shout of applause went up from the crowd. The Emir then entered the mosque, while the rest of the party sat under the large porch; prayers were conducted within, and those outside, at certain parts of the service, bending forward to the ground, muttered "Allah! Allah!" in reverential tones.[1] Seated among the faithful in the porch was the old Borgu fetish-woman, who holds a high position at the Ilorin court, and who, on this occasion, was dressed in numerous flowing cloths, wearing on her head a huge tin hat, ornamented with pieces of red cotton. The service concluded, the procession re-formed, and the Major returned to his quarters, whence he despatched to the chief priest ten bags of cowries[2] for distribution amongst the poor of the town, which little act appears to have raised the white men immensely in the eyes of the Ilorins.

At eleven o'clock next morning we were received by the Emir, who expressed himself much pleased at my successful visit to his war-camp; then having heard the proposed treaty read over in public, he gave orders to his mallam to get it written out in Arabic, saying that when this was done he

[1] In spite of all this, the Mahommedans of these remote countries really know nothing of the doctrines of their religion. They are acquainted with a few verses of the Koran, which they can repeat like parrots, but, beyond this, they are profoundly ignorant of their faith. Their superstitious beliefs know no bounds, and, as a matter of fact, there is little to distinguish the Mahommedan from the heathen in Yorubaland; yet the follower of the Prophet calls his pagan neighbours by the opprobrious term "keferi," a word which is used extensively by Muslims, in all parts of the world, to show their hatred for persons of another creed, whether Christians or heathens.

[2] Equivalent here to about £3, 10s.

would receive the Commissioner again. We returned to our house to pass the time as best we could, while Mr. Paul and the chief mallam busied themselves in getting the form of treaty translated into Yoruba and written out in the Arabic character. This took some hours to complete, although the document consisted only of a few lines,[1] and it was not till 5.30 in the evening that we were able to repair to the palace. There we found assembled all the chiefs and head people of the town, as on former occasions; and the Commissioner, observing that it was already getting dark, proceeded at once to business.

The documents were produced, there being three copies in Arabic-Yoruba and three in English. The English copy was translated aloud by our interpreter, and then the Emir said that he wished one of the Arabic copies to be read by the chief mallam. This worthy, however, was absent, and so, after some discussion, it was agreed that the Imam, who was the only other Arabic scholar present, should take the mallam's place. Unfortunately darkness had crept on, and there were no lamps in the verandah, so a further delay of a quarter of an hour occurred, whilst we sent to our house for candles. At length the reading was accomplished, and the Commissioner asked the Emir to affix his signature to the paper. This request seemed to astonish the monarch somewhat, and he said he did not understand what was wanted. His name appeared at the commencement of the document and there was no necessity to have it written again. Explanation of the legal importance of his signature did not appear to carry any weight, and the Emir finally thought to close the discussion by saying that he could not write. The Commissioner then asked him to make his mark, which could be witnessed by the chief priest, but at this juncture a female figure arose from the midst of the assembly and

[1] *Vide* Appendix IV. B.

perfect silence fell on the awestricken people. The Borgu fetish-woman stood like a spectre in the encircling gloom, her right hand outstretched and her forefinger pointed at our little candle-lit group. "Listen, Alihu," she muttered, in a low and impressive voice, "to the warning of thy priestess. Set thy finger to yon paper and thou and thy people are lost for ever. I know well the ways of these strangers; and should they succeed in carrying away the handwriting of the Great Emir, then what will happen is this—these white strangers will convey the writing to the accursed Ibadans, who will cut it up and eat it, which, as thou knowest, will assuredly give them a power over the Ilorin kingdom, against which it will be impossible to fight. Hearken to the words of thy prophetess, O son of the Great Sitta, and stay thy hand whilst there be yet time."

This speech created a profound impression on every one, and the chief priest ended matters rather abruptly by saying that the hour for evening prayer had already passed, and that we must excuse the people from remaining longer; so, leaving the Arabic documents with the Emir, and bidding him a friendly farewell, we walked home through the night-market.[1]

As at Rabba, the Major had been distributing here a few English silver pieces amongst the women and children; and, now that it had become noised abroad, there was an everlasting crowd of the fair sex (from the highest of the land) seeking admission to our quarters. Two of these ladies (royal princesses moreover) had even been forward enough to make formal proposals of marriage to the white chieftain,

[1] In the market we found exposed for sale country and European cloth (the former the more valuable); a great deal of leather-work, such as saddlery, Koran wallets, leather-covered pipes, and boots; carved calabashes; swords with leather scabbards and blades of European manufacture, imported by way of Tripoli; wooden armlets inlaid with brass and copper wire; beads, and sundry articles of food (yams, corn, beans, bananas, honey, &c.).

in hopes no doubt of having a few sixpences settled on them. They are gentle creatures, these Yoruba women, though their profiles are, to say the least, peculiar, and their greed for silver coins is terrible.

We had made all arrangements for leaving Ilorin on the morning of the 6th, but the Commissioner thought it would be polite to take a formal farewell of the Emir, so sent to express a wish to that effect. The messenger returned, however, saying that the Emir regretted that he was too unwell to see any one; at the same time he sent the Commissioner a handsome black horse as a present, and begged that he would accept it as an assurance of his friendship. He would, he said, retain the Arabic documents; and, as we had the English ones, it was all we required. He hoped we considered that our mission of peace had been successful, and he was extremely grateful for all the trouble we had taken in the matter. Imagining that we had done all that it was in our power to do, and being quite satisfied that the Emir and his people really desired peace, we deemed the non-signature of the documents immaterial, and, at about 8 A.M., commenced our return journey to the Niger. About a dozen chieftains, mounted on prancing steeds, accompanied us out of the town, as far as the river Asa, where they lined the bank and shouted us a friendly farewell, standing in their stirrups and waving their spears above their heads as we were ferried across the stream.[1]

We spent the night at the village of Akayo, where we found fair accommodation, though the usual nocturnal tornado nearly flooded us out of our verandah-lodgings. The

[1] The saddlery used by the Fula horsemen is of native manufacture, and gaudy in the extreme, being composed of various coloured pieces of leather. The bit is usually very severe, to enable the rider to rein up suddenly. Spurs are always worn, and are of the most cruel description, consisting of a flat piece of iron with half-a-dozen sharp points. The stirrups are a remarkable feature, and are in themselves weapons of offence and defence. They are usually made of brass and weigh several pounds.

next day's march was to the farm of one Braima, a native of Lagos, who proved to be a most genial host, taking great pride in showing us over his extensive lands.

For some miles on the morning of the 8th our route lay through Braima's plantations. Our host rode with us to the boundary of his farm, explaining his various projects and discoursing, farmer-like, on the state of the crops and the season. The farm covers a large tract of country, spreading far and wide over hill and dale. Now we pass through vast fields of lofty millet, and now through acres of yams. We skirt a wild-looking granite hill, and descend into a deep valley, where we find ourselves riding under the ample shade of a regular forest of bananas, whose golden fruit furnishes us with a delicious morning meal. Ascending again to the high ground, we get a far-extending view of the surrounding country, and disturb a troop of monkeys, intent on plunder. Plantations of pepper and various spices are next passed through, and, by the time we reach the limits of our host's domains, we have seen what can be done with land, in this part of Africa, by a man of enterprise.[1]

Shortly after bidding adieu to Braima, we came on a small village whose inhabitants apparently devote their time solely to iron-smelting, and we had an opportunity of watching the process, which seems a simple one enough. The lumps of ore are thrown on the top of a pile of wood in a primitive kiln; one native feeds the fire, while another keeps it blazing by means of a pair of native skin-bellows, a thin mud wall protecting the workers from the heat of the furnace. The metal is allowed to trickle through the kiln into a hole beneath, and, when cool, is collected and sold to the blacksmiths of the neighbouring villages. The workers

[1] The amount of manual labour required for the cultivation of a farm of this size must be enormous. The plough is quite unknown in this part of Africa, and a small implement, resembling a hoe, is the only thing used for turning the soil.

informed us that it took them from two to three hours to extract the metal from the ore.[1]

The Major's presentation horse had been the innocent cause of many a mirthful moment to us since leaving Ilorin. He was a fine-looking beast, well over fifteen hands, and when led, on the first day's march, had quite a noble appearance. After a while, however, the reason of the Emir's munificence was revealed to us by the perfidious Abdul Salami (who was still in our company). It seems that the Emir gave him away because none of his people cared to ride him. He had been, in his day, a famous war-horse, and had taken part in many a hard-earned victory and more than one defeat. Eleven times had this veteran been wounded, and, in his last engagement, a war-chief of some renown had been killed on his back. After his retirement from active service, he had found a home in the Emir's stables; but, having unfortunately become weak in the loins, he had involuntarily acquired the unpleasant habit of suddenly collapsing when any one happened to be on his back. On the 8th the Major rode him for the first time, and, leaving Braima's farm, he would have been no disgrace to Rotten Row. At the first halt, however, the old horse sat down before his rider had time to dismount, thereby detracting somewhat from the general effect of our entry into the village. A little later we were jogging along in single file ahead of the carriers, the Major leading and Mr. Paul bringing up the rear, when I heard a clatter behind me, and, on looking round, saw the reverend gentleman and his horse lying in a heap on the ground. I gave a shout to the Major and he pulled up, but, in doing so, his old beast fell over sideways, and nearly crushed his rider's leg under

[1] Iron-smelting is carried on in most parts of the Niger Territories, but Kpada, at the foot of the Rennell Mountains, a few miles above Egga, is especially famous for this industry.

him. The whole incident was irresistibly funny to *me*, though my two companions appeared to think it otherwise. After this the Major discovered that his charger was all right as long as he was on the move, and, to prevent further catastrophes, he decided to dismount immediately he pulled up. We reached Saraji soon after noon, and took up our quarters with our old friend Daudu. When we had rested a little, we got our landlord to escort us into the town, so that me might take some photographs of the place, and an amusing time of it we had. Crowds of people followed us wherever we went, and it was with the greatest difficulty that we could get them cleared away when we wanted to take a view. Mindful of the experiences of Mr. Joseph Thomson[1] in Sokotu, we made Daudu explain carefully what was going on, so that our camera should not be roughly handled by the natives; but I do not fancy that they altogether understood what we were doing.

Coming to the ravine, which passes through the centre of the town, we suddenly descried in the distance four extraordinary-looking figures, standing on the edge of the cliffs, and, to all appearances, flapping their wings gently backwards and forwards. They were too solid for birds, and yet they did not seem to be human beings. Our guide, however, informed us that what we saw were the spirits of the dead returned to life. Not being very superstitious ourselves, we treated the whole thing as a joke, and sent off a messenger to summon them to an interview. Somewhat to our surprise, they came, apparently without reluctance, and, on close inspection, we were convinced that these imaginary ghosts were ordinary human beings, though, owing to the fact that they were sewn up in cloth from

[1] Mr. Thomson, while setting up his camera in the market-place, was suddenly charged down upon by the infuriated mob, who were under the impression that he was about to use against them some infernal instrument of the Evil One.

head to foot, we were unable to find out whether they were male or female. One of them, as far as we could judge, was a man, and the others, boys. Their clothing consisted of a garment of cotton material, which concealed every particle of their persons. On their feet and legs their dress fitted tight to the form, while about the body it hung loose and sleeveless, so that, on stretching out the arms, they appeared to be possessed of wings. The head, again, was tightly covered, and small slits, latticed with thread, allowed the apparitions the use of their eyes. The Major, being of an inquiring turn of mind, and never having had the privilege of a personal interview with individuals who have visited the other world, commenced to overhaul his new acquaintances. First he inquired after their health, and their replies in the Yoruba language seemed rational enough, though given in feigned sepulchral tones. Next he proceeded to look for an opening in their clothing, through which he might have a better look at them, but in this he failed. Then he offered one of them a silver sixpence, which was received with an avidity unworthy of a ghost. While this was in progress, I was busy preparing the camera for a picture of these interesting objects, and had just completed my arrangements, when I suddenly heard a shout from the Major of "Look out, they are off!" and, glancing up, I found my subjects fleeing. I snapped the shutter, only in time, however, to catch the last two figures as they quitted the scene. It appears that the cause of their precipitated flight was an aged heathen priest who issued from a hut close by, and ordered them peremptorily away. On further inquiry, we discovered that these "spirits" are an institution, maintained by the priesthood to prey on the miserable people. It is their duty to collect food for the priests, and should any native offend, they are employed as the means for the destruction of the unfortunate. We left

the spot, not quite certain that the vengeance of the priest would not fall on ourselves.

As we strolled back quietly to our lodgings, collecting entomological specimens as we went,[1] we came on the Nupe chief of the town, holding his court under a tree outside his house. He was seated on the ground, smoking a pipe some five feet long, gaily ornamented with coloured leather, and entered into conversation with us with evident goodwill. Later in the day he paid an official visit to the Major, as did also our landlord's father, the Yoruba chief of the town. The latter was a charming old gentleman, though his great age prevented him from conversing much with us.

This was another of those nights which haunt one for years. In order to make me more comfortable and keep me drier than on our former visit, I was given a portion of the landlord's own room. This apartment was of some size, perhaps thirty feet square, and was, on my account, divided off by suspending a large piece of cloth down the centre. I occupied the inner portion of the chamber, Daudu and his family the outer. At about ten o'clock I retired to rest, but there seemed to be a conspiracy on a grand scale against my obtaining any sleep. For hours, noises of all sorts disturbed the night; the monotonous sound of the ever-present yam-pounder[2] being varied by the fluttering of pigeons among the rafters, the bleating of goats and sheep in the corner of the room, the incessant barking of dogs in the courtyard, the shrill voices of the women, and the uproar of the revelling town's-people. About midnight I had worn myself out with tossing to and

[1] The small collection of butterflies made in the Yoruba country was sent to Mr. Henley Grose-Smith for identification. It was found to contain only one new species, which has been named *Pentila Ferrymani*, and is figured in part xv. of Mr. Grose-Smith's entomological work.

[2] Yams are prepared for food by boiling, after which they are pounded in a huge wooden mortar, a massive block of wood being used as a pestle.

fro on my couch and muttering curses on the heads of all Africans, and was on the point of dropping off to sleep, when my host commenced his prayers in a loud and clear voice on the other side of the curtain; and, judging by the time he took, he must have read the Koran through several times. The prayers at last ceased, but silence had scarcely fallen on the house when we were aroused by a terrific screaming of horses in the yard, and, rushing out, we found that two of our beasts had broken loose and were indulging in a fierce combat. This took some time to stop, and, before matters were peacefully settled, a tornado burst upon us in all its fury, and blew the roof about our ears. An hour before dawn all was quiet, and I managed to snatch a few moments' sleep ere it was time to be in the saddle again.

A hot ride of about eight hours on the 9th brought us to the factory at Shonga early in the afternoon. There we found a strong guard of the Royal Niger Constabulary in fighting "kit," drawn up at the gate, and the agents[1] busy dismantling the place, for, in consequence of the behaviour of the Shonga aristocracy on the day of our departure for Ilorin the Company's officials were closing the factory. The station has never done more than pay its way, and all trade of any value will go to Egga, so the Niger Company loses nothing by the course adopted, and the Shonga people will suffer considerably for the conduct of their chiefs.

We had a great settling-up with our carriers before going on board the *Boussa*, and sent the Emir's messenger away with a handsome present and a light heart. The Emir of Ilorin keeps a number of these messengers, but provides them with no salary. The appointments are, however, much sought after, as they carry with them many rights and privileges. We had several opportunities of

[1] Messrs. Wallace and Lister.

observing some of these rights being put into practice during our journey. The messenger carries in his hand a short stick, about eighteen inches long, on one end of which is the figure of a woman in brass, and on the other a brass ferrule.[1] By the mere fact of showing this stick the bearer obtains, free of charge, whatever articles of food he asks for, though often not without a struggle. These individuals oppress the people to a great extent, an instance of which came under our notice during our last day's march. Passing through a small village, our messenger saw a plump young fowl in a yard, and immediately went in and carried it off, but its owner, an old woman, followed him up and caused such a commotion that we had to interfere. The old lady got back her bird, and our attendant received a pretty severe application of the Major's boot. Besides the right of free rations, these gentlemen are also permitted to levy a tax of a few cowries and yams on every inhabitant of the villages wherein they spend the night, a fact which we only discovered from noticing how averse our man always was to our making a halt in a *small* village.

The country round Shonga is a grand hunting-ground for small birds, and, before our journey to Ilorin, we had spent several evenings rowing about the streams and collecting specimens. On our return, we again took out the guns for an airing, and brought back a good bag for our skinner to work at, amongst other things a huge Senegal jabiru, which put Samson's patience to the test.

On the following afternoon we reached Egga, where we remained until the 12th October, on which day we steamed down to Lokoja. We found this place in a great state of

[1] I tried every inducement to get our messenger to part with his stick of office, but unsuccessfully. He said that without it it was quite impossible for him to return to Ilorin. I suggested that he should say that he had lost it on the journey, but he averred that to enter the Emir's presence stickless meant social ruin to him, if not the loss of his head.

excitement, owing to the presence in the town of two Nupe princes, who had been committing great excesses amongst the inhabitants. On our arrival the Agent-General of the Niger Company immediately despatched a fast launch to Asaba for 200 constabulary men and some guns, and we thought we might have some amusement. Unfortunately, however, the princes got wind of what was in store for them, and quitted the town a few hours before the constabulary arrived; but as, in future, the force is to be permanently located in the place, Lokoja will at any rate be free from further disturbances.

CHAPTER XI.

TRIBUTARIES AND BRANCHES OF THE LOWER NIGER.

ERE our departure from Lokoja, the waters of the Benue had fallen several feet. The confluence no longer presented the vast ocean-like appearance it had done a month before; islands and sandbanks were cropping up at the river's mouth, and we saw the last steamer come down for this season. During the next eight months traffic will be almost at a standstill. We turned our backs on the Mahommedan countries of the Niger, not without some regrets, for we had before us a certain amount of business with people for whom we could have no respect whatever, who have no good points, and who inhabit countries the climate of which, to the white man, means fever, if nothing worse. Our party had hitherto kept wonderfully well, Mr. Wallace had certainly suffered, to a great extent, from sun fever, and the Commissioner had had occasional severe attacks, but personally I had only been *hors-de-combat* for two days since leaving England.

Our ornithological collection caused us much disappointment, nearly the whole of the Benue birds which we had deposited with the agent at Lokoja, prior to our ascent of the Kworra having become useless through the ravages of insects and damp.[1] There are immense difficulties in the way of collectors in a climate like this, and the naturalist

[1] A list of the specimens brought to England is given in the Appendix.

who would do any good must be provided with the best appliances before leaving England.

At noon, on the 18th October, the *Boussa* steamed away from Lokoja, under a salute from the mountain-battery of the Niger Constabulary, and at 4 P.M. anchored off Idah.

Having heard that the Atta was in camp seven miles from Idah, the Commissioner sent word to him by launch from Lokoja, early in the morning, that he would like to see him sometime during the day; accordingly, at about 9 P.M., his chief eunuch came on board with the news that the Atta had arrived at the Company's factory. He apologised for the lateness of his master's arrival, saying that it was due to the rain, which had been falling all the afternoon, it being contrary to the Igara religion for rain to be allowed to desecrate the holy person of the Atta. We immediately went on shore, where we found His Majesty and suite. The Igara king is a man between fifty and sixty years of age, and in form is lean and gaunt, his somewhat repulsive face being covered with scanty grey hair. He was wearing a dirty tobe and small white skull-cap, but no ornaments of any kind. He spoke in a hang-dog manner, and poured out his woes to the Commissioner. Formerly, he said, he had been the most powerful ruler in the land, but that, since white traders had come to the country, and the slave trade had been abolished[1] he had (to use his own words) "shrunk up and become dry," instead of becoming fat, as he had hoped to do. The dealings of the white men were fair enough, but he had expected to make more money out of them, and what with the incursions of the Mahommedans on the north and the Basas in the interior his power was

[1] There can be little doubt that the abolition of the slave trade is, in a great measure, the cause of the decline of the power of the Lower Niger chiefs. Formerly the slavers filled up at the river's mouth with slaves sent down by these big chiefs who, now that the infamous trade has ceased, have no means of acquiring wealth.

gradually passing from his hands. At midnight it was determined to defer the interview until the morrow, when the Commissioner proposed to visit the Atta at his palace.

We landed at about nine o'clock next morning, and, having obtained the services of a most intelligent native Bible-reader,[1] started on our way to the palace. The path winds upwards, through a cluster of huts of all sizes and shapes, out of which shyly peep the ugly black faces of women and children. In some of the outhouses we saw two or three miserable-looking dogs tied up, which, our guide informed us, were being fattened for food, the Igaras considering them a great delicacy. Besides monkeys and parrots these people also eat crocodiles and their eggs. Their method of capturing the crocodile is peculiar, and not altogether unattended with danger. Having discovered the beast asleep on some sandbank, a stalk is made from behind, and when the native arrives within striking distance, he plunges his spear with all his force through the animal's tail, thus pinning it to the ground, the rest being quickly done with clubs and spears. Leaving the huts, we passed through a mile or more of rich cultivation, where tobacco, yams, and cassava were growing luxuriantly, then into a country overgrown with high grass, amongst which stood numerous patriarchal bombax trees. Our walk was full of interest, not only on account of the conversation with the interpreter about the odd people amongst whom he dwells, but also from the pleasure we gained in collecting, as we passed along, varieties of new insects. In the grass land we found several specimens of those extraordinary little insects, which appear to liken themselves to the particular vegetation on which they spend their existence, some like pieces of dead stick, and others, in colour and form, resembling exactly

[1] Mr. Pythias Williams, of the Church Missionary Society, and of Sierra Leone.

THE ATTA OF IDAH'S PALACE.

the blades of grass which grant them resting-places.[1] Our pugnacious little friend, the mantis, was also here in numbers, and we captured sufficient of them to have quite a tournament for nights to come under our tumblers after dinner.

The Atta's palace stands in a clearing, away from the town, and consists of a collection of mud buildings, one of which has a kind of dilapidated tower to add importance to the structure. Everything about the place bespeaks poverty, and there exist no traces of the splendour mentioned by early visitors to Idah. We were not admitted further than the entrance porch or verandah, and there we had to wait for some time, whilst the Atta and his priests performed certain juju rites, necessary before an interview with white people. These were conducted within the house, and we could hear nothing except low murmurs and the occasional tinkling of a bell. The verandah contained a large clay image or fetish, and a few bells and cows' tails were hung up round the door. One by one, men and boys dropped in and took seats on the ground near us, waiting, like ourselves, for the palaver to commence. Amongst the little crowd was a boy, ten or twelve years old, whom the people treated with a certain amount of respect. He was an albino, and, being naked, presented a most. disgusting appearance. His skin was quite white—not the flesh colour of Europeans, but unwholesome and loathsome in hue ; the wool on his head and his eyelashes were also white, whilst his eyes were almost

[1] During our travels we found many different specimens, illustrative of *protective mimicry*, though, I regret to say, we preserved none. Those collected at Idah I *did* put by in a cardboard box, but, unfortunately, forgot all about them, the result being that a few days afterwards, when I recollected them, I found that a colony of little red ants had eaten them out of recognition. These red ants infest the *Boussa*, and are a great nuisance. On a shelf in my cabin stood a pair of boots which I was seldom wearing. On taking them down one day, I found that one of them had become the home of these tiny marauders, who appeared quite distressed when I turned them out.

pink. His features were those of the worst type of negro, and altogether he was the most unpleasant object I have encountered for many a day. This individual, we were told, is heir to the throne; and the people admire his colour, since they consider albinos the particular gift of their God.

The Atta, attended by a number of his eunuchs, made his appearance in due course. He was clothed rather more respectably than usual, but still was not very sumptuously apparelled. On his head was a small white cap, in front of which hung an ivory fetish ornament, and the rest of his dress consisted of a white tobe and a pair of red pyjamas. We found him as disagreeable in his manners as at the former palaver, and, though the audience lasted for a couple of hours or so,[1] we gained little information from him, the drift of his talk always coming back to the same point—his poverty. He was told that the best thing he could do would be to turn his attention to agriculture and trade, when he might in time become rich and powerful again. We left him, however, in a friendly mood, receiving from him a present of two goats and the offer of a bullock, if we liked to go into the bush close by and shoot it, but this we declined with thanks. He was most anxious, he said, to possess a revolver wherewith to terrify his enemies in war, so he was given an old one of mine, but without ammunition, as the Arms Act of the Niger Company forbids the sale or presentation of such articles to the natives.

We returned to our boat along the sandstone cliffs overhanging the river, and, just outside the town, found ourselves amongst a network of indigo pits. We had come on numbers of these dye-works in different parts of the country,

[1] These palavers are made doubly tedious by reason of the ridiculous habit the chiefs have of employing a person, styled the "king's mouth," who repeats everything the chief says. Thus, at this interview, the Atta made a remark in a low voice; it was repeated aloud by his "mouth" to our interpreter, who again had to translate it into English.

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INDIGO DYE-PITS AT IDAH.

but until now had never seen the process of dyeing. A dozen or more circular pits, about six feet deep and four feet in diameter at the mouth, are dug close together; on the edge of each is a high-forked stick, with a long pole balanced in the fork; one end of the pole is weighted, and to the other end is suspended the piece of cloth to be dyed;[1] into the pit are thrown lumps of raw indigo, and water is poured on the top up to the edge of the pit, wood ashes are then added, and fermentation takes place. After this the scum is taken off the surface, and the blue dye is ready for use. The piece of cloth is then let down into the dye, being drawn up every now and then, to see how it is getting on. One man and a small boy seemed to be managing the works; and, to judge by the number of pieces of stuff hanging up to dry, they must have plenty of work to do. The colour of the dye here did not appear to be so good as in some of the Mahommedan countries, but whether this was due to the quality of the indigo, or to the process, I cannot say.

At 7.30 P.M. we made fast alongside the landing-place at Asaba, where we met our old friend, Mr. Samuel Moore, the Chief-Justice of the Niger Territories, and several of the Company's officials.

Things, we find, have undergone a change in the Lower Niger since we passed up it three months ago. Death has overtaken some of the Europeans, and sickness has fallen on others; Morgan, the doctor, and Robinson, the agent at Atani, both lie at the present moment seriously ill with fever, whilst Woodruffe, the energetic Kew gardener, has become a shadow from the curse of the river.[2] Beards have

[1] A very similar arrangement is met with in Egypt and many Oriental countries for drawing water from wells.

[2] Dr. Morgan died a few months later in England, and Mr. Woodruffe succumbed before he could leave the country. Two better men at their work it would be hard to find. Mr. Robinson also fell a victim to the climate later on.

become the fashion, set, apparently, by the Agent-General, Mr. Flint, whose face is now hidden in a forest of thick hair. The river has also changed with the times, having risen some thirty or forty feet since July. Our deck is now above the level of the bank, instead of being at the bottom of a steep slope, as on our previous visit; the womens' bathing-place has disappeared, and they wash themselves elsewhere. Wars and rumours of wars have taken the place of peace among the various tribes hereabouts, and the Niger Constabulary have their hands full. In the Wari River, a brush with the Patanis has resulted in the somewhat hasty retreat of the little constabulary force engaged. At Omogu, on the Orashi River, there is every prospect of a disturbance, and here we are in the thick of a "palaver for war" between the Abutshis and the Onitshas, which may take a serious turn at any moment. The dispute in question illustrates well the state of utter barbarity in which the tribes still are. It appears that an Abutshi convert (to Christianity) gave birth to twins, and, in accordance with the Ibo laws, the people of Abutshi seized the woman, with the intention of destroying the infants and driving the unfortunate mother from her home. After some deliberation, however, the Abutshis, fearing the wrath of the Niger Company, delivered up the woman to the members of the Church Missionary Society at Onitsha. The native missionary,[1] wishing to show his appreciation of the conduct of the chief of Abutshi, sent him a present of five shillings' worth of goods. This act of generosity on the part of the missionary had quite the opposite effect to that desired, for the minor chiefs of Abutshi, having an eye to business, sent in to the mission-station and demanded a further present of sheep and goats, saying that *they* it was who released the woman. This insolent request was

[1] The Rev. C. Strong.

refused, and the Abutshis determined to be avenged. They laid their plans and sent parties to watch the road from Onitsha to the Company's factory at Abutshi, having settled amongst themselves to make a victim of the first Christian woman who passed that way. An inoffensive *employée* of the Company happened to be coming at night to the factory, when she was suddenly seized on the road by the Abutshis, who, then and there, completed their work by cutting her up and eating her, sending her head as a present to a neighbouring friendly tribe. The fact that the woman was a native of Onitsha naturally roused the ire of the Onitshas against the Abutshis, and the Niger Company, being more or less responsible for the behaviour of all these tribes, is forced to make the Abutshis pay the penalty for their cruel conduct. The situation of the town of Abutshi is against any immediate action being taken, since it is distant some miles from the river, and is surrounded, at this season, by a wide belt of dense bush and high grass. An attack by the constabulary would be attended by immense risk, the Abutshis being well aware of the advantages of ambuscades and poisoned arrows.

Mr. Wallace was left to "fix the palaver," while the Major and I went off to visit the Anam (or Inam) country. We started in the *Boussa*, taking with us the despatch-launch *Vigilant*, to navigate the Anambara River, which is a small tributary of the Niger. Shortly after leaving Asaba, we entered the Anambara, a fine stream near its mouth, being 200 or 300 yards wide and well-wooded down to the water. At 5 P.M. we anchored off Gloria-Ibo,[1] the first trading-station arrived at in the Anambara district, and a most picturesquely situated little place. The factory stands on

[1] This peculiar name, which is only that of the factory, is said to have been given to the place by a grandiloquent native of Sierra Leone, who on first seeing the high ground, exclaimed "Gloria! Gloria!"

a hillock, about 100 feet above the river, and, according to Mr. Hilliard, the agent in charge, is far healthier than most of the stations of the Lower Niger districts.

The inhabitants of the towns and villages, at the back of the station, belong to minor clans of the great Ibo tribe, such as 'Nsube,[1] Efiti, Anam, and many others. The 'Nsubes inhabit both banks of the Anambara at its mouth and a few miles up, the Efitis dwell further east, while the country of the Anams extends from that of the 'Nsubes northwards into the Igara country behind Idah.

At an early hour on the morning of the 21st October we transferred ourselves from the *Boussa* to the *Vigilant*, leaving the former anchored off Gloria-Ibo. The *Vigilant* has now taken the place of the little *Benue*, and, though not such a comfortable launch, is perhaps better adapted for our work amongst the wild people of these southern streams. She is a small boat, built expressly for revenue work, with armour-plated bows and a single propeller. She draws two feet forward and three feet aft, and can travel at about twelve knots an hour in slack water. The river at this time of year looks its best, the water overflowing the banks for some distance into the forests. Magnificent trees bathe their lower boughs in the rushing stream, orchids and creepers hiding the daylight between the trunks; troops of monkeys leap from branch to branch, chattering at us in their rage at our intrusion, and flocks of grey parrots pass over our head at lightning speed, their wild screams echoing through the woods. The scene is one of real tropical grandeur, and, but for the knowledge that the valley is laden with miasma, we might almost fancy ourselves in fairyland. Our course lay north-east, the stream winding considerably at times. To the west the wedge of country between the Niger and the Anambara is flat and covered with forest; to the east a low

[1] Also called Nsugbe and Isugbe.

A YOUNG ANAM COUPLE.

range of hills is visible in the distance, and the land slopes up gently from the water. Very little cultivation and few huts are met with during the ascent of the river until noon, when we reach the small trading-station of Igbaku[1] on the left bank. The native town lies a mile or more inland, and the inhabitants, who are Ibos, appear to be more given to fighting with their neighbours than to trade.

Having inspected the factory, which is presided over by a native agent, we continued our way and arrived at Ogrugu at 3 P.M. This is the northernmost trading port on the Anambara, and is distant some fifty miles from the river's mouth; it stands at an elevation of about eighty feet above the water, and, like Gloria-Ibo, is fairly healthy. In the evening we strolled into the native town, about a mile eastward of the factory. It is a typical West African place, laid out with well-shaded lanes between the groups of dwellings. A ditch surrounds the town, crossed at one or two points by rude bridges, and, at the principal extrance, stands one of the finest trees I have ever seen. This is the old juju tree, where formerly the human sacrifices took place, and where possibly they take place still, for, although the Royal Niger Company's authority is felt far and wide, it is hard to eradicate all at once the ancient barbarous rites of these remote tribes. All about the town we see evidences of the depth of superstition in which the people live. Here are trees smeared with blood and oil, there strings of feathers suspended across the pathway, and everywhere charms and

[1] The products of all these stations south of Lokoja are confined almost entirely to palm oil, kernels, and rubber, though a small trade is done at some places in pepper, copra, and gum-copal. The natives bring in the rubber in white lumps, called "Niger heads," the method of collecting having been shown to them by the Niger Company. An incision is made in the rubber-producing tree or creeper, of which there are countless varieties, and the sap is allowed to flow over the natives' naked arms. When a thick coating has formed and somewhat hardened, it is scraped off and rolled into balls. The buying price in the Niger is £90 to £100 per ton, and the selling price in England from one shilling to two shillings per pound.

fetishes of one kind or another. The huts, which are rectangular in shape, and constructed of mud and thatch, are built in little clusters, each group having its compound with, generally, a small patch of cultivation. The houses seem to be kept clean[1] and tidy, and the open spaces between them are noticeable in this respect, being continually swept by the boys of the town. The Ogrugus are nominally subjects of the Atta of Idah, though, in their customs, they lean more towards the Ibos than the Igaras. The women are remarkable for their anklets, those of the matrons being large cymbal-like plates of brass, while the young girls weigh down their legs with coils of heavy wire. Some of the men also we noticed wearing bands of ivory at the knee, but we were unable to discover if this is a special mark of distinction or merely a fashion. They are a wild and savage-looking people, and regarded us with no great amount of affection. The maintenance of friendly relations with a people of this description is no easy matter, since the natives look on the traders as "fair game," to be imposed upon whenever possible. They demand three times the proper value for their goods, and, if they do not obtain what they ask, become insolent and overbearing. In September 1888 the Niger Company had to send an expedition of some 250 men against the villages of Amugu, Isoque, and Iga (near Ogrugu), to punish the natives for having plundered the factory and beaten the agent in charge. Since then matters have been on a more peaceful footing, but the tribes are by no means subdued.

The Commissioner held a palaver with the chiefs at sunset in the factory. They came down dressed in a variety of quaint costumes, each of them carrying a broad-bladed

[1] A mixture of cow-dung and water is used by nearly all West African tribes for washing their huts, which not only gives them a cleanly appearance but acts as a safeguard against fleas and such other creeping things. This wash is used also throughout India.

spear, and the head chief bearing in one hand a war-horn formed out of an elephant's tusk, and in the other a curious brass staff-of-office, having a spear-shaped head and a pitch-fork at the butt. The old warrior did all the talking, no one else being allowed to get a word in edgeways. His speech was delivered standing, and accompanied by much gesticulation, and, though it lasted for an hour and a quarter, there were only two points of any importance touched on—both grievances against the Company. One was that he was not allowed to fight with the neighbouring tribes as often as he used to do, and the other that he could not get the Company to sell him as much gunpowder and gin as he wanted; and he finished up by saying that, if this state of things went on, it would be his painful duty to quarrel with the white men. But he was an amusing speaker, frequently making the whole assembly laugh, and I fancy that his bark is a good deal worse than his bite.

The chiefs arrived soon after daylight on the following morning to get their presents, and when they had received the usual donation of cloth, the old head man thanked the Commissioner profusely, but said that he had forgotten to give them any gin. The Commissioner replied that it was against the principles of the British Government to encourage the drinking of spirits.[1] The chief, however, was not

[1] The importation of cheap and vile spirits into the seaboard countries of the Niger Protectorate has, for the past century or more, been the utter ruin of the natives. Most of the people of the Delta have become confirmed drunkards, and, as a consequence of intercourse with Europeans, have gone back instead of advancing in the scale of civilisation. It would be unfair while on the subject not to mention the philanthropic efforts of the Royal Niger Company in abolishing the liquor traffic in their territories. On the granting of the Charter, the Company set about reducing the consumption of spirits chiefly by placing a heavy duty on their importation. In 1890 they went further, prohibiting altogether the importation of spirituous liquors into any place north of the seventh parallel of north latitude, and putting an almost prohibitive duty on their importation into the Delta countries. This praiseworthy action of the Company has caused a certain amount of disaffection amongst the natives, who are no longer able to afford their favourite drink,

to be denied his drink thus easily, and, after much coaxing, he and his men were allowed a glass all round to drink the Queen's health. Better hands at tossing off a tumbler of neat gin I have seldom seen.

We made a start at about 8 A.M., and came down stream at a tremendous speed, hoping to reach the *Boussa* at mid-day, so as to be at Asaba by nightfall. As we steamed round the bend past Igbaku, we could hardly believe our eyes when we saw a man-o'-war's pinnace aground off the factory and two blue-jackets up to their waists in the river, trying to shove her off. The sight of a good old British sailor was as welcome to us, after our absence from civilisation, as the homecoming for Christmas used to be in our schoolboy days. What the boat was doing up in this out-of-the-way place, we could not make out; however, we gave the stranger a line and hauled her out of her difficulty. She proved to belong to H.M.S. *Alecto*, and had brought up Commander Pullen to see the Commissioner about the surveys of the Rio del Rey, which he was about to commence.[1] Our new acquaintance came on board, and we resumed our journey, with the pinnace in tow, reaching Gloria-Ibo at 1 P.M., whence we continued our way to Onitsha in the *Boussa*. We anchored off Onitsha at three o'clock in the afternoon, between the *Alecto* and the *Henry Venn*, and, an hour later, proceeded up stream to Asaba, Commander Pullen leaving us to make his way to the coast to begin his survey work in the Cameroons. The next two days were spent between Onitsha and Abutshi, in connection with the recent troubles, it being finally settled that

and has placed many difficulties in the way of obtaining labour. The invaluable Kruboys formerly received their wages principally in gin, and now that this form of payment is forbidden, they seek employment elsewhere.

[1] Major MacDonald had received orders at Lokoja, from the Foreign Office, to proceed, on the completion of his tour in the Niger, to delimit the frontier between the Oil Rivers and the German possessions in the Cameroons.

no expedition should commence operations until the dry season.

The *Boussa* left Abutshi at 4 A.M. on the 25th, and came down stream to the little mission-station of Alenso, where we took on board Mr. 'Mbwa, a native Bible-reader, to act as Ibo interpreter. Then stopping at Atani and Utshi for a short time, we reached Abo at 2 P.M., mooring our steamer alongside the factory-yard.

The town of Abo, which stands about three-quarters of a mile behind the factory, is approached at this season by water, the floods reaching into the heart of the town. It has, in fact, become a regular Venice, canals taking the place of streets, and the natives moving from house to house in canoes. It seems strange that this site should have been chosen for the town, since for three or four months in the year the inhabitants are forced to live in a morass, the flooring of the huts in some cases being nothing better than slush. Yet the Abos are a healthy and well-developed people, and, according to their own accounts, far prefer the wet season to the dry.

In the afternoon the chiefs were summoned to a grand palaver on the *Boussa*, and they came down in their state-canoes, which were decked for the occasion with bunting of every colour. The head chief is a young man of about thirty, and, though not perhaps handsome, has rather a pleasant face. He was dressed in a tunic of a Lieutenant of Royal Engineers, striped silk pyjamas, and red cap adorned with a feather; in his hand he carried a long stick, and, for our edification, he affected a "swagger" in his walk, which would have delighted the heart of a drum-major. The other chiefs wore costumes equally grotesque, a red coat being apparently the most fashionable garment, and, in one or two instances, the only one, though they usually had round their necks strings of really valuable

coral. In the retinue of the head man were two old individuals who said that they were sons of the chief (Obi) who behaved not too well to the members of the expedition of 1841. They have apparently gone down in the world since their father's time, for they were a ragged-looking pair. After the reception, the Commissioner made a distribution of presents on shore, and carefully handed out the various articles to the chiefs. When, however, he had gone on board the *Boussa* again, a free fight took place amongst the chiefs and their followers, some evidently being disappointed with what they had received. It was a most amusing sight, and one not readily to be forgotten. Voices were raised to yelling pitch, and sticks were freely used, the presents being scattered about the ground, and any one who touched them immediately set upon by the others; tugs-of-war went on for pieces of cloth, and the head chief himself was seen struggling for a "head" of tobacco with one of his subjects. For half-an-hour this state of things continued, and was only put an end to by the interference of the local police of the Royal Niger Company, who hustled the belligerents into their canoes and sent them home. Possibly the fighting was resumed when they reached the town, for we could hear an uproar going on long after dark.

According to Abo tradition, the town, a century or more ago, belonged to the Akris, one of the numerous Ibo clans, the forefathers of the present possessors being natives of Idu. These latter people revolted against their chief at Idu, and, having been driven from their native town, betook themselves to the neighbourhood of Abo. Here they were well received by the Akris, and given a portion of land whereon to build a town, on the understanding that they should give assistance to their friends, if called upon to do so. The refugees soon became jealous of the power of the

CHIEFS OF ABO COMING TO THE PALAVER.

Akris, and determined to make an attempt to get the upper hand. They asked the chiefs and young men of the Akris to meet them at a certain spot in the bush at night, for the purpose, as they asserted, of settling some important affairs of state. The Akris, unsuspecting treachery, agreed, but stipulated that no weapons should be taken by any one, mats and fans being the only things allowed. At the appointed time, the two clans met, each Idu having carefully concealed in his mat a well-sharpened matchet (or chopper). The Idus opened the discussion by demanding that one of their number should be appointed king of themselves and of the Akris, to which, of course, the latter objected. This was the signal for the Idus to draw their matchets and fall on their former friends, more than 800 of whom they slaughtered on the spot. The Akris were obliged after this to abandon their town, and became scattered about the country, paying a yearly tribute of smoked fish to the new king of Abo.[1]

Almost opposite Abo lies Ndoni, at the point where the river of the same name flows out of the Niger. The Ndoni flows in a south-easterly direction for about fifteen miles, and then joins the Orashi or Agenni, which takes its rise in the Oguta Lake, and eventually finds its way to the sea through the Sombrero and New Calabar Rivers. Thus, from Bonny and New Calabar (on the coast) to the main Niger there is an uninterrupted waterway, navigable at all seasons by canoes, and, during the rains, by launches of light draught.

We left the *Boussa* off Ndoni and started down the small river at daybreak, on the 26th, in the *Vigilant*. The stream

[1] Baikie says :—"The original inhabitants of Abo were named Akra, and, when driven away by the race who came from Ado, they went and settled in different directions, their towns being distinguished by the prefix of Akra to the previous name of the spot; thus we have Akra-Atani, Akra-Ugidi, and Akra-Uteri."

is about 100 yards wide, and, like all these minor waterways, thoroughly tropical in aspect. On reaching the Orashi, we turned up northwards and got into Oguta Lake at three in the afternoon. The lake is situated about thirty miles from the junction of the Ndoni and Orashi, and is a fine piece of water, being about five miles long from east to west and a mile and a half wide. Virgin forests fringe the water, and, with their sombre verdure, make up a picture beautiful in the extreme. A small stream at the north-west end connects the lake with the Niger in the wet season, and during the dry months communication is maintained between the two by a rough path, some fifteen miles in length, which strikes the main river at Akra-Ugidi.

Steaming across the lake,[1] we encountered numbers of tiny canoes—the smallest I have ever seen—each containing a single paddler, sometimes male and sometimes female. The occupants of these little boats were either intent on fishing or returning from distant markets, and their fright at our approach was amusing to watch. Those who were foolish enough to disregard us suffered severely from our "wash," which threatened to swamp their frail vessels.[2]

The town of Oguta stands on the northern shore, and the Niger Company's factory on the southern, so placed by desire of the chiefs to prevent complications between the servants of the Company and the natives. We took the *Vigilant* right up to the town, and lay close in among the huts, the inhabitants swarming down to look at us. They are a

[1] The water of the lake is considered unwholesome, and if used for bathing purposes is said to produce kraw-kraw and other skin diseases.

[2] These canoes were about eight feet along and not more than a foot broad, so narrow, in fact, in the beam that I doubt if any European could sit in them. When in danger of being swamped, the paddler places his legs overboard to steady his little craft, and when he arrives at his village he takes up his canoe and conveys it home on his head. Two of these canoes were brought to England by us, and exhibited at the Stanley and African Exhibition in 1890, many persons imagining them to be merely models of African "dug-outs."

savage-looking and hideous people, and at first sight it is difficult to believe that they are human; the men disfigure their faces with the spectacle-like white markings which I have mentioned previously, and the women, by their frightful fashion of dressing the hair, look as if they had two or three pairs of donkey's ears growing out of their heads. The place, which is of no great size, is filthy, and the odours that arise from the shore are pestilential. The huts are rectangular, and built of timber and mud with a thatch of palm leaves and grass.

Having whipped up the chiefs for a palaver at the factory, we skirted the eastern shores of the lake and anchored off the trading-station,[1] where we were to spend the night. At about five o'clock we heard the din of the chief's drums and the shouting of the paddlers as the canoes came across the lake. Every one was dressed in his state robes, and the canoes were decorated with the gaudy flags of their owners. We sat in the verandah of the factory, and received each chief as he arrived, and it was one of the most interesting palavers I had yet assisted at. From the landing-place the ground slopes up for about fifty yards to the factory, and the chiefs, coming ashore separately, paced slowly up from the water towards us, followed by their retinues of wives and slaves. The head chief was the first to land, and evidently tried hard to impress us by the absurd dignity of his movements. In his hand he bore a long brass spear, round which hung a number of loose iron rings; this he used as a walking-stick, making the rings jingle as he brought it to the ground at each step. He was dressed in a loin-cloth and the long red coat of a Chelsea pensioner, while a lady's tiny straw hat was set coquettishly on one

[1] Oguta Station is in charge of a Sierra Leone man. At present the trade is small, but it will doubtless rapidly increase as the people get to understand its advantages.

side of his head. The other chiefs copied the movements of their head man, and were equally oddly attired. Some wore black frock-coats of broadcloth of undoubted London build, others, tunics of the Line; and one old gentleman was disguised as a commander of the Royal Navy, though the trousers had been forgotten. Their choice of hats was also varied. The Church, the Army, the Navy, the Piccadilly "swell," and the little girl at the seaside, all were represented here. As each chief arrived opposite the entrance to the verandah he planted his spear, point downwards in the ground, as a sign that the palaver was of a peaceful nature, and then took his seat in front of us. The ladies, who had for the occasion bound up their heads in silk bandanas, sat outside; and the slaves, who rowed their masters across the lake, squatted in long lines close to the building, the head slave marshalling them with an English carter's whip. The meeting commenced in the usual manner, both sides addressing the assembly at some length, after which the Commissioner inquired if there was any special subject which they wished to discuss. The chiefs replied that they would like a few minutes' private consultation amongst themselves, and so were ushered into an empty store-shed, where, judging by the sounds, the scene must have been a lively one, though there was no sign of anything having occurred when they reappeared.

The head chief then rose and addressed the Commissioner in low and solemn tones. He said that the Commissioner was doubtless aware of the friendly relations[1] which existed between the Oguta people and "the M'Intosh men," and

[1] This boasted friendship shortly afterwards underwent a change, and, early in 1891, the Ogutas, assisted by the Osus (a tribe whose people do not trade but live solely by fighting and plunder), attacked the Oguta factory. News was brought down to Asaba, and a relief expedition immediately started off. Marching from Akra-Ugidi up to their knees in mud, the little force, under Major Ewart and Mr. Flint, reached the factory within the day and drove the enemy off. The following morning they attacked the Osus,

that there was nothing to complain of in the way that trading was carried on; but there was one very serious matter about which they now wished to ask advice. Some weeks ago the King of Oguta died, and they had made the usual arrangements for his funeral; the Niger Company had, however, sent word to them forbidding the sacrifice of any human beings on the occasion, in consequence of which the King still remained unburied. They now requested that the Commissioner would grant them permission to sacrifice the proper number of slaves, which they promised should be done quite quietly and without the knowledge even of the Niger Company. When the head chief had concluded, the other chiefs in turn delivered their addresses on the same subject, but it appeared to us that none of them were so anxious about the sacrifices as the head man, who is the future king. The Commissioner, of course, refused their request in pretty strong terms, and spoke to them plainly about their barbarous customs, though I do not fancy that the chiefs were at all convinced of the wickedness of their ways, and, from the expressions on their faces I should say that, now that they are certain that they cannot get leave to make the sacrifices, they will make them without. The faces of the slaves, who were sitting outside, were distorted with excitement during the discussion; and, though they dared not utter a sound, their joy at the Commissioner's discourse was apparent. It was quite evident that no religious mania impressed on them the necessity for being sacrificed to accompany their masters to another world.[1]

killed forty-two of them, and burned their town; but before they could have a reckoning with the Ogutas, messengers came in begging for peace, and the Company's authorities had to content themselves with the imposition of a heavy fine on the chiefs.

[1] The custom of sacrificing the wives and slaves of a deceased chief is almost general amongst the tribes of the Niger Delta. The reasons of the custom are supposed to be that the deceased's reputation among his own and neighbouring people depends on the number of individuals sacrificed,

The lake looked simply glorious in the golden light of the rising sun as we left the factory next morning and made our way down the Orashi River. Between four and five miles below the point where the Ndoni flows into the Orashi is Gregiani Station, on the left bank of the river; and in mid-stream, opposite the factory, the guardship *Emily Watters* lies at anchor. On this grand old hulk are two Europeans and twenty-one men of the constabulary, whose duty it is to see that no one brings goods by this route into the Niger Territories, without paying duty thereon. Occasionally the natives try to run the blockade, but generally without success. A short time ago, however, a native of Omogu[1] attempted to take his canoe past the guardship in the dark, and was fired on and killed, which has resulted in a bad feeling between the people of Omogu and the Company, though the former have now begged that the palaver may be "talked," and not made a subject for war. After inspecting the hulk, and the trading-station at Gregiani, we proceeded down stream for about five miles to the town of Idu,[2] on the left bank.

The matter to be discussed at this place was an important one, affecting not only the Niger Company but also the New Calabar traders. As I have mentioned in the opening chapters, the European traders of New Calabar and other Oil Rivers employ, as middlemen, the chiefs of the country. In the old days of the slave trade, these middlemen supplied

and that, when he enters the other world, the more attendants who accompany him the greater the respect which he will receive. More practical people, however, assert that the real reason why the chiefs are so anxious to keep up the custom is that, since the wives and slaves of a chief are in his confidence and know where his wealth is hidden, they would be likely to poison him to gain possession of his property, whereas if they know that their master's death means their own, it is to their advantage to keep him alive.

[1] The town of Omogu lies on a small lake a few miles east of Gregiani. The inhabitants are the wildest of any of the known Ibo clans. It is also called Okaba-Omoku.

[2] Also called Okaba-Edu.

slaves to the Europeans; and, on the abolition of this traffic, they commenced to trade in palm oil. In New Calabar the chiefs have their depôts at Bugama, Abonema, and Degama, where also the European merchants have factories. The middleman chief sends his domestic slaves in canoes up the rivers and streams of the interior to purchase the oil at the markets where this commodity is sold. Idu was one of these markets and, apparently, a favourite one. The New Calabar chiefs were therefore not a little annoyed to find, in 1885, that the Niger Company (of whose existence they were hardly aware) had suddenly come down the Orashi River and concluded a treaty with the Idus, which, amongst other things, gave the Company the right to put import and export duties on certain articles by whomsoever brought to, or taken away from, Idu. The Calabars naturally resented this, as they considered, unwarrantable intrusion of an English company, and refused to pay any attention to its customs regulations. For two years the Company took no action in the matter, but in September 1887 sent notice to the New Calabar chiefs that it would no longer tolerate the infringement of its customs, and that any canoe passing the frontier without having previously cleared at a custom station would be seized and confiscated. The only reply given by the Calabars to this notice was a message, conveyed to the people of Idu, stating that, if the Niger Company established a factory at their town, the Calabars would wage war on the tribe and burn Idu about their ears. Thus the miserable Idus found themselves between two very unpleasant fires, but, dreading the more the vengeance of the Calabars, commenced to repudiate their treaty with the Niger Company. Further action on the part of either side was put a stop to by Consul Hewett at the end of 1888, the question being allowed to remain for the decision of Major MacDonald.

As we neared Idu we found almost a hundred large trading canoes, moored to the right bank of the river, opposite the town; these proved to belong to the Calabar people, which showed us that they still used the place as one of their chief markets. Landing at the town, we repaired to the palaver-house to hold an interview with the chiefs who had signed the treaty of 1885. Kangu Owar, the head chief, though seemingly rather an intelligent savage, was a ruffianly-looking individual, and the other chiefs resembled him closely. There was, we found, very little satisfaction to be got out of them, as the meeting was flooded with New Calabar men, who threatened the chief whenever he said anything of which they did not approve. We learned, however, that the chiefs *had* signed the treaty with the Niger Company, and the only things they appear to want now is free trade and plenty of gin. Idu is quite the filthiest town we have yet visited, and the inhabitants (who are Ibos) the wildest natives we have had anything to do with. The women are perhaps even uglier than the men, which is possibly due to the fact that they wear little or no clothing and stain their faces and bodies in grotesque patterns.

Our journey back to the Niger took considerable time, and it was almost dark when we reached the Ndoni River; huge banks of jetty clouds gathered all around us, and for some time we thought that we were in for a heavy tornado; this, however, passed over, leaving the night starless and black. Fortunately we had an excellent pilot, and the wheel being in the fore-part of the launch enabled him to keep in mid-stream. We sat up in the bows, looking out for snags, our most dreaded foes, and ready for any emergency, for to have struck one of these meant almost certain disaster, and the chances of ever swimming ashore in such a current were very poor indeed. Our situation was not

too pleasant, and, as is usual on such occasions, the conversation turned to the most gruesome subjects, in which crocodiles and snakes and various forms of lingering death played a leading part. Hour after hour passed, as we slowly ploughed our way up stream, until at last we found ourselves under the stern of the *Boussa*, and only just in time to escape the burst of the long-threatening tornado.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

ABOUT twenty miles south of the point where the Ndoni flows out of the Niger, another and a far larger branch leaves the main stream on the opposite side and, taking a south-westerly course, eventually joins the Forcados River, which falls into the Bight of Benin. This is the Wari, a river which rivals in volume the parent stream, and which passes through a tract of country fertile and thickly populated, yet almost entirely undeveloped. The people dwelling on its banks are mere barbarians who have but recently held intercourse with Europeans, the little trade in palm oil, which they hitherto carried on, having been chiefly with the middlemen traders from Benin and Brass.

Before daylight on the morning of the 28th October we dropped down stream from our anchorage at Ndoni to the trading-station of Agberi, where we spent a couple of hours in wooding the *Boussa* prior to our visit to the Wari district;[1] then reascending the main river for about five miles, we entered the Wari at 9 A.M. The scene at the dividing of the waters is one of great magnificence, and only surpassed by that of the confluence at Lokoja. The Wari, indeed, looks as if it were the main stream, stretching, as it does at this season, a thousand yards or more from bank to bank. The channel is wide and deep, and is navigable for fair-sized steamers at all times of the year right down to

[1] Also written Iwere, Owere, Owihere, Awerre, Warre, and Ouarre.

the sea. Descending the river at a rapid rate for ten miles or so, we came to the mouth of the Asé River, which flows in from the north. A short distance up this tributary lies the trading-station of Asé, where the Niger Company and Messrs. Harrison & Co. both have factories. The inhabitants of the country belong to the Patani tribe, a people chiefly remarkable for their treachery, lawlessness, and love of plunder. The chief, whom we interviewed, is a great juju-man, and much dreaded by the neighbouring tribes; his treachery is proverbial, and it was amusing to see him embrace the Niger Company's Agent-General on our arrival, although only a few years before the old scoundrel had planned his murder. On that occasion the natives succeeded in burning the factory and killing the native agent in charge, but they received punishment for their misdeeds at the hands of the Niger Constabulary and a small party of blue-jackets and marines.[1] The palaver with the head men of the town was neither interesting nor long, as they appeared to be an ill-conditioned lot and not inclined to talk much, so by 2 P.M. we had regained the Wari River and continued our journey towards the sea. The river still remained a fine specimen of a tropical waterway and, where we anchored at nightfall, was upwards of half a mile in breadth.

We passed numbers of villages all along the forest-covered banks next morning, most of them submerged by the overflowing of the river. The inhabitants turned out as we steamed by, shouting their salutations and hoisting the little *red ensigns* with which they have been provided. At the town of Abekibo we stopped in order to get pilots to take us down to the Forcados, as the numerous streams

[1] Shortly after our visit, M. Mizon's mission entered the Niger by the Forcados and Wari route, and were foolish enough to make fast their launch at night close to a Patani village. The natives fell on the party in the dark, and before the Frenchmen could get away two Europeans were killed and M. Mizon himself was badly wounded.

hereabouts are rather misleading, some of them flowing into the Ramos River instead of in the direction which we wanted to go. As we gradually neared the coast the noble forests, interspersed with cocoa-nut and other palm trees, gave place to a densely matted fringe of mangroves, amongst whose slimy muddy roots crocodiles were constantly seen and fired on. We had barely time to notice the foul fever-laden atmosphere before we found ourselves suddenly refreshed by a cool sea-breeze blowing up the wide Forcados River and were revelling in the welcome sight of the ocean. The Forcados at its mouth, where we anchored, is two or three miles across, and over the bar at low water there is sixteen feet of water; the anchorage is good, and possibly in the future there will spring up here an important and a useful port. At present the place has a deserted appearance, as only one factory (belonging to Messrs. Hutton and Osborne) breaks the monotonous outline of the shore. Around this solitary dwelling there is no sign of habitation nearer than the small village of Gulah, which stands a short distance inland from the left bank of the river. We landed on the sandy beach opposite this latter place, intending to visit the chiefs, but the heat was so unbearable and the country surrounding the village so swampy that the Commissioner decided to hold the palaver on board his steamer. Soon we were surrounded by numbers of canoes filled with the Gulah chiefs and head men, who had evidently donned their holiday attire. Tall hats are the rage here—from the old white beaver to the modern Gibus, but the fashion in coats and other garments appears to be unsettled. The only remarkable "get up" was that of a young chief who wore the complete dress of an English jockey—cap, breeches, boots, and all; the effect, however, was somewhat spoiled by the substitution of a "churchwarden" pipe for a whip. Why this gentleman should have affected the role of a sportsman

it is hard to understand, for horses do not live in these parts, in fact the natives are, in many instances, perfectly ignorant of the existence of such an animal; but possibly the individual in question may have visited Lagos during the race week and become the possessor of the outfit of some bankrupt turfite. Late in the afternoon we got under way again and returned up stream to the village of Borutu, about five miles above Gulah, and on the same bank. This village contains about 100 huts, more or less dilapidated in appearance, and, like Gulah, is peopled by Ijos and Zekris, inoffensive and timid natives, whose principal occupation seems to be fishing. The sun had set before the palaver with the Borutus was concluded, and we had a dark journey of several miles against the current ere reaching the European factories at Wari, off which we anchored for the night.

There was a marvellous stillness in the air when we came on deck at daybreak on the 30th, and, a little later, when the sun grew warm, the damp heat which filled the atmosphere was stifling to a degree. We were lying at anchor opposite the topmost factory, belonging to Messrs. Bey and Zimmer, a German firm from Benin, whilst, lower down, we could see the houses of Messrs. Alexander Miller, Brother & Co., James Pinnock & Co., and Hutton and Osborne, all built in clearings amongst the mangrove swamps, and forming quite a little picture. The white men, of whom there are ten or a dozen in the settlement, told us that they obtain the palm oil in which they trade chiefly from the Sobo country, which lies to the north of Wari, the Zekris acting as middlemen. There are numerous villages in the swamps surrounding the factories, and although they are mostly concealed from view by the thick-growing mangroves their existence is made known by the incessant jabbering of the inhabitants. The only town of any importance in the neighbourhood is Wari, which is close to the lower factories

and on the left bank of the stream up which we had come from the Forcados. It is a swampy-looking place of some size, and is peopled by Zekris, who consider it a sacred spot.[1]

Having visited the factories, we left our anchorage at 9 A.M., and, steaming due south through a narrow creek for six miles or so, reached the town of Abekibo, on the main Wari branch. Thence continuing our journey towards the Niger, we stopped at Ofuniba (a small town on the left bank) to obtain the services of a pilot to take us up a tributary close by. The town, like Abekibo, is built on the edge of the river, which, at this time of the year, inundates the place and must make living very uncomfortable. The huts are enclosed by rectangular mud walls and are thatched with palm leaves,[2] the palaver-house raising its lofty roof high above all the surrounding dwellings. Pusigu, the chief, came on board and volunteered to act as our pilot up the Akiabodo River; he proved to be a genial sort of old gentleman, clothed in a scarlet blanket (on which was emblazoned a life-sized yellow lion[3]) and a white tall hat. An hour before sunset we anchored off the mouth of the Akiabodo, which we proceeded to explore in the *Vigilant*. The stream is about fifty yards wide, and its banks are covered with palms and dense vegetation. About four miles north of the mouth we came to the village of Oagbi, where the natives greeted us with much effusion, swarming down to the water and offering us palm wine. While we were parleying with the people, we saw a woman suddenly

[1] "Jakry men have a great veneration for Warre. The corpses of 'big men' are taken there for burial after death; while in the case of 'small men' only the hair and toe and finger-nails are taken. The same custom applies to Jakry women. The bodies of slaves are consigned to the bush or river."—*Governor Maloney, in the Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, vol. xii. 1890.

[2] Generally of the bamboo palm (*Raphia vinifera*).

[3] These gaudy blankets are of English manufacture and very popular amongst the chiefs of the Niger Delta.

leave the crowd, after a hurried consultation with her friends, to return shortly, bearing in her arms a repulsive-looking albino baby, which, by her signs, she evidently wished to impress on us was of the same breed as ourselves. The village of Akiabodo is situated five miles higher up and a short distance from the left bank of the stream, but above this spot our launch was unable to go. The inhabitants of both these places are Agabos, who are the oil manufacturers of the district, carrying on trade through the Zekris and Ijos. These three are the principal tribes of this portion of the Delta, the numerous smaller tribes being all connected with one or other of them.

The Zekri[1] tribe inhabits the countries lying between Lagos and the Pennington River, and northwards to the Wari. The origin of this people is uncertain, some authorities professing to find in their language a connection with the Yorubas, while others, including the Zekris themselves, assert that they are an offshoot of the Benins. They speak a language of their own, though, where they come in contact with the Benins, Sobos, Ijos, and other neighbouring tribes, it becomes more or less corrupted. Nana, the present chief of the Zekris, although appointed by the King of Benin, is in reality a semi-independent ruler. He is a most important personage, and has a town on the Benin River, which is a model of cleanliness and order. The Zekris are, as I have said, the carriers or middlemen in the palm oil trade, but they also devote their attentions to other pursuits, such as fishing and agriculture.[2]

[1] Also known as Ichekre, Izekiri, Ishekire, Dsekiri, Dzekri, Shakri, Jekri, Jakry, and Jakri.

[2] "A native salt industry of old standing continues. The salt is made extensively by Jakry men from the leaves of a willow-like tree not unlike the mangrove, which are burnt, the ashes then soaked and washed, and then evaporated. The residue represents native salt, which is even now preferred for many uses to introduced salt."—*Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, 1890, vol. xii. p. 606.

The Ijos[1] occupy the countries on the coast from the Pennington River to the Opobo, and about seventy miles inland, and of course in this great extent of territory vary immensely in character and customs. Westward of Akassa they are still for the most part savage cannibals, though, where they border on the Wari River, they have become more civilised, chiefly through having taken up the carrying business of the palm oil trade. In the eastern Oil Rivers, such as Brass, New Calabar, and Bonny, civilisation has done something for them, and they can now boast of many wealthy and important chiefs. Even here, however, cannibalism and other atrocious pagan customs are not altogether things of the past. The Ijo language, which has several dialects, is said to be peculiar in that it is closely connected with that of the Sobos (a people whose country lies to the north of Wari), and is unconnected in any way with the languages of neighbouring tribes. About the Agabos little is known at present. They are not a large tribe, but occupy several villages on both banks of the Wari River to the eastward of Abekibo. They speak a distinct language, and appear to be industrious agriculturists and oil producers.

We travelled on by moonlight, and did not anchor until 11 P.M. The following morning we were under weigh early, and, after ascending the stream for a few miles, made a short cut by turning down south into a creek which connects the Wari with the main Niger. On this waterway is situated the Patani village, where a small party of the Niger Constabulary had recently been engaged. It appears that a man from Brass came up the Niger, with a canoe-load of smuggled goods, and was detected by the *Vigilant*, which was patrolling the river. A long chase ensued, ending in

[1] The Idzos of the Lower Niger, mentioned in chapter ii.; also known as the Orus near the Nun mouth of the Niger.

the Brass man running his canoe ashore at the Patani village, whose inhabitants immediately turned out and opened a heavy fire on the *Vigilant*, which eventually had to retire.[1] As we neared the village in the *Boussa* a telescope was brought to bear on the spot, when we could just discover the heads of a number of villagers who were concealed behind the banks and walls. We had to pass within forty yards of the place, and were not at all certain how we should be received, so our rifles were laid out ready for an emergency. But all went well, the Patanis probably thinking that the *Boussa* was too big a boat for them to tackle, and not a sign of a native was to be seen as we steamed by. We entered the Niger again, a few miles above Ekow, and reached Akassa at sunset, thus completing our tour in the river.

I have made no mention as yet of a system which the Niger Company has adopted to ensure the good behaviour of some of the turbulent chiefs of the territories. Paternal affection is not unknown amongst these wild people, and the Company, having discovered this, demands the sons of obnoxious chiefs and keeps them as hostages for a year or more at Akassa and other places. The system is found to work well and give good results. The boys (of whom we saw a dozen or so at Akassa) are generally quite young, and are taken on as servants by the European agents of the Company, thus acquiring a certain amount of useful knowledge and becoming civilised. Some of these lads belong to the most savage tribes of the Niger, yet, after a few months, one sees them waiting at table as if they had been reared in a Strand restaurant. They soon pick up Kru-English, since they can find no one in their new home who can understand their own language, and amongst

[1] Early the following year a strong force of constabulary attacked the place and destroyed it.

themselves nothing is spoken but the West Coast jargon. At the end of their time they return home, often most unwillingly, taking with them their wages in pieces of cloth, and showing their fellow-tribesmen, by their well-cared-for appearance, that it is no bad thing to get into the employment of the white man.[1]

We remained in Akassa waiting for news concerning the survey of the Rio del Rey, when, on the 4th of November, the Commissioner received a telegram from Bonny, announcing the sudden death at that place of Commander Pullen, which, as can well be imagined, was a terrible shock to us.[2] This sad news arrived when Major MacDonald was suffering from a severe attack of fever, and he was so overcome that for some time his health gave me considerable concern. The climate was evidently beginning to tell on us, for the Commissioner had barely recovered from his illness before I was prostrate, but the thoughts of returning to England brought about a speedy convalescence in my case. It was useless now proceeding to the Rio del Rey, so, after telegraphing to England, the Commissioner decided to leave for home by the next steamer, and, accordingly, having embarked at Brass in the S.S. *Roquelle*, we commenced our homeward journey on the 17th November, and were back in our native land in time to eat our Christmas dinners.[3]

[1] According to Colonel Galliéni in "Deux Compagnes au Soudan Français," the French have a similar system in operation in Senegal, only they appear to carry it further, and give their hostages a thorough French education in schools established for the purpose.

[2] An obituary notice, with an account of Commander Pullen's valuable services, will be found in the *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, vol. xi. 1889.

[3] A few months after our return Sir James Fergusson made the following reply in the House of Commons relative to the Mission:—"Major MacDonald's report regarding the Niger Territories is intended to be confidential. It is of a very detailed character, and cannot be communicated. Indeed it will receive further and more particular consideration. A principal object of his work was to furnish Her Majesty's Government with materials for considering the question of extending the charter over adjacent districts.

There remains little further to be said, yet perhaps a few words explanatory of certain matters touched on in the foregoing pages may be of interest to the reader.

The subject of government by chartered companies is one which is at the present time much before the public, many arguments being brought forward to show that it is impossible that a sovereign, who is likewise a trader, can govern with fairness to all parties. The fact, however, remains that charters have been granted to companies by statesmen, who are far better able to judge of the advisability of this form of government than are most of the individuals who decry it. With regard to the Royal Niger Company, all that I write concerning its operations and administration is simply the result of my own observations whilst engaged on the work of Major MacDonald's Mission. I am altogether disinterested in the Company, and am personally acquainted with no member of its governing body in England. We have seen how the Company came into existence, and how it has gradually strengthened its position in the Territories, until to-day we find it, at any rate financially, a success. Whether it will remain so time will show.[1] In this age of trade competition every prosperous commercial enterprise has its traducers and its enemies, and, in this respect, the Niger Company is no exception to the rule. Hardly a week passes but one sees in the newspapers—English, German, or French—grave charges brought against the administration of the Niger Territories, but, fortunately, owing to its possession of a charter, the Company is not left alone to fight its battles. Of

He was further to inquire into certain points under discussion with Germany, with the result that satisfactory explanations have been exchanged during the recent negotiations at Berlin. In addition he was to examine the administration of the Royal Niger Company, with regard to which, while pointing out certain imperfections, he describes it as in the main highly satisfactory as to progress, system, and observance of the charter."

[1] The Niger Company pays a dividend of about six per cent. per annum.

course in this, as in every administration, shortcomings exist, but critics appear to forget that the Territories in question are inhabited by savages, quite unacquainted with a civilised form of government, and therefore difficult to deal with.

Much has been written of late about the "scramble for Africa," and at the present day the majority of Englishmen firmly believe that Africa has been coolly parcelled out and taken possession of by the Great Powers, without the consent of the natives themselves. This, I need hardly say, is altogether erroneous. Africa, it is true, has been divided into various "spheres of influence," restricting the operations of each power to its own "sphere," the object of which is solely to prevent international complications.[1] There is no question of claim to the actual land; *that* belongs to the natives as much now as it ever did. Take, for example, the Niger Territories. The small plots of land on which the factories stand have been either purchased or are rented by the Company from the native owners, and this is specially provided for in all the treaties made with the chiefs. The question of land-grabbing may, therefore, be put on one side.

We now come to the matter of treaties. African treaties are a by-word, and their value has been described as no more than that of the paper on which they are written. Be that as it may, they are a necessity, since no trade can be carried on without some sort of contract with the chiefs, ensuring their friendship towards the European traders. In the case of the Niger Company, this friendship of the ruling powers is bought and paid for by annual subsidies, and by the promise of protection against the attacks of

[1] Thus one power agrees that it will not in the *sphere* of another make acquisitions, conclude treaties, accept sovereign rights or protectorates, nor hinder extension of influence.

neighbouring tribes. The chiefs, on their part, grant powers to the Company to trade, mine, farm, or carry on any other occupation in their territories; to settle all native disputes, and levy taxes on exports and imports; and they agree that they will not have intercourse with strangers or foreigners except through the Company.[1] The amount of the subsidy depends on the power and importance of the chief; for instance, the Emir of Nupe receives about £2000 per annum, the Sultan of Sokotu £1500, the Sultan of Gandu £1000, while some of the petty chiefs of the lower river get as little as eighteen shillings. It will thus be observed that Englishmen pay pretty heavily for the right of trading with the natives of this part of Africa.

By the terms of the charter,[2] the Company is held responsible for the maintenance of order in its territories, and for this purpose a strong force of constabulary, and a fleet of twenty or more vessels, are kept up at considerable expense. The reader will have formed his own opinion of the actual state of the country, so it is not necessary to say more on that point, except perhaps to remind him that, during our journey of thousands of miles from one end of the Niger Territories to the other, we experienced no sort of obstruction from the natives until we reached Shonga, where the trifling incident, already described, took place.

The questions of revenue and customs, and duties on imports and exports, are too complicated and technical to be entered into lightly in a book of this class; and, moreover, they would be of little interest to the general public. The merchants and traders, whom these matters concern, are

[1] One of Major MacDonald's duties was to inquire from the various chiefs whether they had made the treaties they were alleged to have made, whether they still held to them, and whether they had received their subsidies regularly. I may say that every chief interviewed answered these questions in the affirmative.

[2] *Vide* Appendix.

probably too well acquainted with the subject to receive enlightenment from what I could tell them.

So much for the great chartered company of West Africa. The sister companies of the East and South do not come within our province, and, being in their infancy, little information could be gained from a knowledge of their operations.

Modern writers on Central Africa, carried away by their theme, hold forth at length on the marvellous wealth locked up in the Dark Continent—its mines, its forests, its ivory, and its magnificent crops. They proclaim it to be a veritable Eldorado—the land whence Solomon obtained his riches—and which, in the future, they tell us, is to yield a wealth second only to that of India. Yet, if we take the countries of West Central Africa, lying between the fifth parallel of south latitude and the fifteenth north, and search the writings of the explorers of them, we find little to lead us to believe that any extraordinary wealth exists in these lands. If gold, silver, or precious stones were to be found in any quantities in the interior, surely they would, before now, have been brought to light by the natives here, as in other parts. In our own journey eastward to the headwaters of the Benue, and westward up the Kworra, we never once saw a native wearing gold or silver ornaments,[1] neither did they appear to have ever heard of such things. Ivory is still fairly plentiful, though this cannot last for long, as elephants are becoming scarcer each year, and a considerable amount of the present supply comes from the buried hoards of the chiefs, who are now cognisant of its value. The days when a hundredweight of ivory could be purchased for a bottle of gin are past, and the native of Africa of to-day knows full well the worth of a tusk. Vast virgin forests stretch across the country from one end to the other, but it

[1] Except rings made out of English silver coins.

is very doubtful if any but very valuable timber would be remunerative as an export. We have left, then, merely the minor natural products of the land, such as palm oil, rubber, gum, shea butter, and a few others of less importance. The palm oil trade is perhaps fully developed. The oil-bearing palm grows at no great distance from the coast, and in very few places which have not been open to traders for many years past. The shea butter-yielding area is restricted, and no very great further development in this trade is likely to occur. Rubber, gum, gutta-percha, and a few medicinal seeds are the only exports at present known which can increase with the opening up of the interior. It is not probable that a trade in these natural products alone can pay; therefore, when ivory has failed (which it must do, and that at no very distant date), if minerals worth the working, be not discovered, or if the low lands near the rivers and the tablelands of the interior be not cultivated, and do not yield forth fruit in abundance, then West Central Africa, from a commercial point, must prove a failure.

With regard to these tablelands, out of which so much capital is made, is there anything to show that their cultivation would be remunerative? In the first place, the question of manual labour will be a difficult one to solve. In Equatorial Africa, at present, all labour is performed by slaves, a system which, of course, could not continue were the land to be worked by Europeans. The natives of these parts appear to be unwilling to work for wages (they lean more towards trading than agriculture). Probably this would be overcome in time, but, until such were the case, coolies from India, or Kruboys, would have to be imported. As to what these high plateaux are capable of producing, it is almost impossible to form an opinion until some experiments be made; but, in all probability, coffee, tea, chincona,

and other things which thrive on the hills of India would do well. Cattle have been grazed by the pastoral tribes over the hill country from time immemorial, but cattle of African production would be quite unsuitable for export.

As a field for colonisation by Europeans, the interior of Africa is altogether out of the question. Europeans degenerate rapidly when settled in a country peopled by Asiatics or Africans, and the grandchildren of the first settlers lose all their energy and become no better than the natives themselves; this has been proved over and over again in India. Where in Central Africa can we find a climate or a country equal to Kashmir or the Nilghiris? yet neither of these places has become a settlement for Europeans. Again, if we turn to the New World, there are in Canada (the climate of which is salubrious and the land rich) thousands of square miles still open to emigrants from Europe. What inducements are there then for emigration to the interior of Africa? It is therefore fair to conclude that Equatorial Africa will never be colonised by white men, although these may, in the course of time, start plantations and make them pay their way.

The great African companies have been compared to the East India Company, and attempts have been made to show that Africa has as much chance of succeeding as India had. The comparison is almost too absurd to notice. India, when the East India Company commenced operations, was already a well-developed country, whose princes were rolling in wealth—not a wealth of palm oil and other bulky commodities, but one of solid gold. The pagoda tree has yet to be discovered in Africa, and it will take a better man even than Stanley to find it. The commercial outlook, therefore, in Africa is, I am afraid, not a brilliant one; Englishmen who invest in the country must be content to get five or six per cent. for their money, and, as a well-

known philanthropist has said, "take out the remainder of their dividends in philanthropy."

I have referred in the early chapters to the Christian Missions and their work in the Niger territories. There can be no doubt that missionaries, no matter what their nationality, colour, or denomination, are an immense aid to the civilisation of the natives. Even if they do not make many converts, the good deeds which they are continually doing must in time impress on the most savage people the advantages of civilisation. Englishmen expect too much from foreign missions; they seek in the reports merely for the numbers of converts made during the past year, forgetting the impossibility of suddenly making a Christian out of a cannibal. They compare two perfectly dissimilar countries and judge entirely by the printed results. In Southern India Christianity has spread amongst the heathens with great rapidity; but Southern India is a land where famines unfortunately are not unfrequent, and I am afraid the converts are in a great measure, as I once heard them described by a clergyman, "curry-and-rice Christians." In the peaceful parts of Central Africa famine is unknown, and, therefore, the inducement of obtaining food from the missionaries does not exist. The natives, however, are not slow to see the advantage of having their children educated, and where mission-stations have been established on the banks of the Niger, the schools attached to them are well attended. The efforts of the Church Missionary Society in spreading the Gospel in the the Niger Territories have been most praiseworthy. As far back as 1841 it despatched the Rev. J. F. Schön and Mr. Samuel Crowther [1] with the government expedition of that year to make inquiries as to the possibility of establishing stations amongst the wild tribes of the river. The report which these gentlemen

[1] Afterwards Bishop of the Niger.

made on their return induced the society to reduce the principal languages of the Niger to writing, to translate the Scriptures into them, and to commence training a certain number of native youths as missionaries at its Sierra Leone school.[1] The establishment of mission-stations soon followed, and the results appeared so favourable that the staff of native missionaries was increased to a far larger number than was originally intended.[2] The French then, observing the good work done by the Church Missionary Society, established two Roman Catholic missions in the territories. Thus a strong body of earnest workers was formed to cope with the vile customs of the heathens, and to endeavour, by a system of education amongst the rising generation, to sow the seeds of Christianity in the country. Mr. Wilmot-Brooke's scheme of plunging into the heart of the Mahommedan country is doubtless a noble one, yet, as I have before remarked, it is far easier to convert a hundred heathens than one Mahommedan, and every effort at the present moment should be made to firmly establish Christianity among the Lower Niger tribes before the Moslem wave sweeps over the land.[3]

[1] The reasons put forward, in recommending the employment of natives as missionaries, were that Englishmen were unable to stand the climate for any length of time, and that natives would be more acceptable to, and have more influence over, their fellow-countrymen than white men.

[2] My own experience (in the Niger) of native missionaries, as a class, is that they are remarkably well-educated, well-informed, and broad-minded. The value of their presence in the country is immense, since, knowing the language of the people, and having an intimate acquaintance with the native customs and habits, they are able to afford reliable information to the Europeans who administer the government. To the Rev. Charles Paul, and others of his fellow-workers, I am indebted for many interesting details about the various tribes.

[3] This is no new idea. The late Sir James Marshall, writing in the *Month*, a few years back, on the subject, said, "The north of Africa has been entirely converted to the Moslem religion, and that religion is rapidly and forcibly advancing southwards across the entire continent, and therefore the missions in West Africa placed among the heathen not yet converted could, if strong enough, meet the advancing plague and stop its progress, even if it could not

The Mohammedans are slowly but steadily moving southwards and are, even now, harassing the pagans in the northern parts of the Lower Niger; they are already firmly established in most of the countries of the south bank of the Benue and of the Kworra, and, though possibly they are not so zealous about their religion as formerly, they are still eager to capture slaves. The Niger Company, by its treaties, is responsible that the heathen tribes are not molested, as also that the Mahommedans do not make war on their neighbours; it rests therefore with the Company to check the Moslem invasion. The first blow will have to be struck soon, and perhaps the struggle will be a long one, but about the result there can be but one opinion. The Fulas have never yet encountered disciplined troops with English leaders, and it is impossible to say how they will fight. Their numbers are doubtless immense, but they have none of the fanaticism of Madhists or Ghazis to buoy them up, and those who are well acquainted with them report them to be the most arrant cowards. The Arabs on the east and the Fulas on the west have been, and still are, the curse of Africa, but their days are numbered. Energetic action on the part of the chartered companies might in a few years stamp out slave-raiding altogether; but as long as there is a demand for slaves in the countries of the more enlightened Mohammedan rulers, they will continue to be captured one way or another. So great is the power of the Sultan of Turkey, as the head of his religion, that, were he

drive it back." He goes on to say that, on the West Coast, a broad belt of heathen country is left untouched, which will soon be subdued by the Mahommedans, whose motto is "slavery or conversion." "Here, therefore," he concludes, "lies a noble field for missionary efforts, and for carrying out the crusade preached by Cardinal Lavigerie. In this belt lie countless tribes of heathens, still unsubdued by Moslemism; but each year the Arabs and Mahommedan tribes press on, carrying war and misery among them, principally for the purpose of carrying off fresh droves of slaves to the various markets where they can be sold."

to absolutely forbid the traffic in slaves, I am convinced, amongst the Fulas at any rate, slave-raiding would end. The export of slaves from the West Coast has long since ceased, and I doubt if any of the slaves captured by the Fulas are conveyed to the countries north of Sokotu; there is no question, therefore, of an outside market. An envoy from the Sultan of Turkey to the Sultans of Sokotu and Gandu would be almost certain of success; but would the Sultan of Turkey send one? Do these great Mohammedan rulers wish to abolish slavery, or will they go on for ever thinking the possession of a crowd of harem attendants of more importance than the lives of thousands of human beings?

To close these pages without a reference to the climate would be almost an insult to the Niger, yet nothing that I can say can make any change in its world-wide reputation for unhealthiness. The Delta is still to-day, as it was found to be by the first English expedition which visited the river, a hotbed of malarial fever. Europeans are unable to live in its deadly swamps for more than two years, and the consequent and frequent change of officials sadly impedes the development of the country. North of the confluence there is a vast improvement, and the climate compares not unfavourably with India. In the countries of the Western Sudan, Europeans might remain for three or four years at a time, and, were a sanitorium established here and there on the highlands, for even a much longer period. The diseases chiefly to be feared in these northern parts of the Territories are dysentery and sun-fever, both of which can be avoided with ordinary care, but, from what we saw of the mode of living adopted by the English residents, ill-health is not to be wondered at. In most hot countries Europeans pay great attention to their personal comforts, but on the Niger and Benue they appear to care little how they live. They clothe

themselves in thin cotton materials, when flannel alone should be worn, and they cover their heads with light smoking-caps, even under the fiercest sun. Their houses are unprovided with *punkahs*, thermantidotes, or other means of relief from the excessive heat, and the ordinary rules for the preservation of health in a tropical country are altogether disregarded. Were more heed given to these rules, I am certain that the death-rate amongst Europeans in the Delta would be much lower, and the West African steamers would no longer land on our shores such a string of invalids from the "Nile of the Negroes."

CHAPTER XIII.

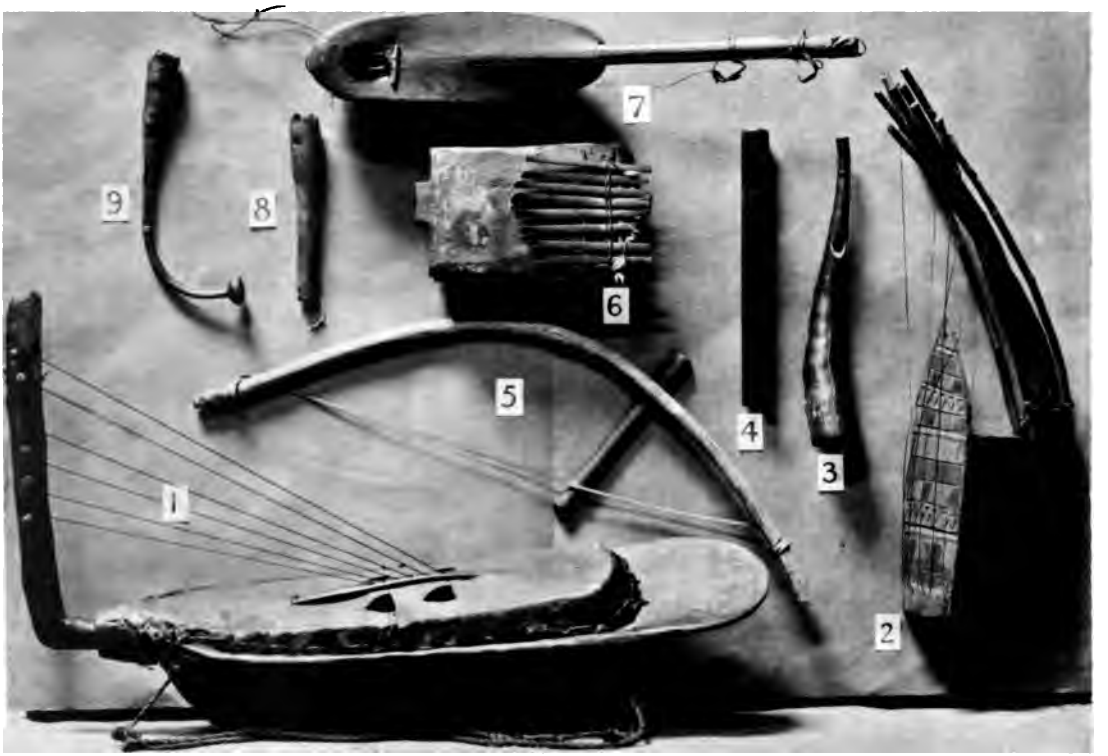
MUSIC AND MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

THE subject of African music, although touched upon by many travellers, can hardly be said to have received much serious notice; and although most travellers admit the ethnographical value of national music, comparatively few possess the ability or the special knowledge requisite to investigate the subject. The following chapter[1] has been most carefully prepared from materials collected by the members of Major MacDonald's mission, founded upon a series of very comprehensive notes and queries made out expressly for this purpose by the writer. These notes and queries were to some extent similar to those drawn up several years ago by the late Mr. Carl Engel, and were supplemented by the experience gained by the writer in similar investigation of the music of India. No pains were spared to render the answers to these queries as complete and comprehensive as possible; nothing was taken for granted, and the strongest evidence was invariably taken in order to test the truth of the replies. Consequently there is good reason to suppose that the information obtained can be relied upon for its accuracy. But of so interesting a subject the following pages must be regarded as a sketch only, to be corrected and extended by other inquirers, musicologists and ethnographists, who may come forward to continue it.

The inhabitants of the countries watered by the Niger and Benue Rivers possess naturally a strong predilection

[1] By Captain C. R. Day, F.S.A., Oxfordshire Light Infantry.

2 U[illegible]
3 A[illegible]
5 T[illegible]
6 I[illegible]
8 F[illegible]
9 D[illegible] WITH FLAT HEAD.



NATIVE MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

1. PARA.
2. UBO.
4. LERA.
5. TO.
7. NATIVE GUITAR.
8 FURI.

for music, chiefly evident by their songs and instrumental performances. As is the case with most uncivilised nations, their love for rhythm is shown by a decided taste for noisy accompaniments (such as drums and rattles) to their songs. Dancing, too, is much indulged in, and is the almost invariable companion to their songs. Instruments of almost all kinds are found. Some of them show distinct signs of Mahommedan influence, and probably owe their origin to the incursion of Arabian traders or slave-dealers. Others again show decided traces of ancient Egyptian origin, and point in a very marked manner to the fact of a civilisation having extended in remote times over a large part of the African continent.

The instruments most commonly met with are described in detail below.

INSTRUMENTS.

The Ubo.—A stringed instrument, consisting of a wooden box or body, usually triangular in section; one side of this box forms the sound board, the strings being attached to holes bored in the lower end. From the back of the instrument rise eight bowed pieces of stick, to the far ends of which the strings are secured; the natural spring of these sticks serves to tighten the strings to the pitch required. These sticks are secured to the body of the ubo by vegetable fibres. The strings of the ubo are made of some tough palm fibre, and produce a not unmusical tone. Instruments of this kind are generally found all through Africa. They can hardly be said to exist only in the Niger countries, for in the British Museum specimens variously constructed, and often containing elaborate workmanship of its kind, from all parts of Africa, may be seen. In the Niger territories the ubo is usually tuned thus:—e♭, d, e♭, f, g, a, b, c^{1}, the pitch, of course, varying with the size of the instrument.

The Para.—A stringed instrument of rather curious form, consisting of a wooden body, hollowed out from the solid, and covered by a leather belly. A thin ledge of wood passes longitudinally down the centre of this belly; the strings, passing through holes bored in this ledge, are secured to a similar ledge of wood upon the under-side of the belly. The other ends of the strings are secured to a neck of wood which rises from the upper end of the instrument, at an obtuse (or even a right) angle to the belly. There are no tuning-pegs. The strings are secured by being twisted round the neck and then "jammed" by a peculiar knot. This method of fastening the strings of instruments of the harp species was employed in ancient Egypt, and it is still in use in Burmah. The tone is rather sonorous, and reminds one of that of the Arabian *rabôb;* the strings are usually made of twisted hair or cat-gut. This instrument, although not perhaps so common in the Niger countries as the ubo, is yet found almost all over Africa, and is described by various travellers under different names. It is very similar to that called *nanga,* described by the late Carl Engel. The shape of the para is evidently of ancient Egyptian origin, and indeed to the ancient Egyptians may be traced the design of many articles now in common use among the savage tribes of Africa. In nothing do we find this more evident than in musical instruments. Harps thus constructed are portrayed in various sculptures and paintings, both Egyptian and Assyrian, and it is worthy of note that an instrument thus curiously shaped is to be found figured upon the Buddhist sculptures at Amravati. A comparison of the para, and others like it, with ancient Egyptian instruments of similar shape now in the British Museum, will be found most interesting. This instrument is employed principally by the Juko tribes, and the specimen brought home was

obtained at Donga. It is suspended from the neck of the player, and played with both hands.

Many instruments that were met with appeared to be of Mahommedan introduction, a fact which is easily to be accounted for, since all the countries north of Lokoja have been conquered, within the last century, by Mahommedans, who almost always carry small tambouras or lutes of three or four strings wherever they go. Indeed the national stringed instrument would appear to be this small lute. It consists of a pear-shaped gourd body, with a parchment belly, and a cane neck placed so as to form an angle of about 160° with the belly. The total length of the instrument rarely exceeds eighteen inches. There are no tuning-pegs. It is, in fact, the banjo in its most simple form. The strings, made of gut or twisted hair, are wound round the neck and "jammed" at the required pitch, the natural spring of the neck keeping them taut. The sound of these instruments much resembles that of the Arabian rabôb. Occasionally an instrument of rather larger and better construction is found. Although very similar to the small lute just described, it differs in that it is constructed with an iron head containing "jangles," and is ornamented by a metal tail-pin curiously worked; indeed, it would appear to be a ruder form of the Arabian *rabôb el shaer*, or *poet's viol*.

A small rabôb played with a bow was also met with, but this instrument is so clearly of Arabian introduction that it merits only passing mention here.

Wind Instruments.—Of these various kinds appear. Of the really indigenous instruments the most common seems to be a sort of horn called *akpale*, constructed sometimes of gourd and sometimes of the horn of an animal. These instruments are of various sizes, and consist of a hollow horn, near the smaller end of which is a mouth-piece;

the mouth-piece is placed invariably at the *side*, and not at the end, and this construction is peculiar to African wind-instruments of the trumpet kind. Trumpets, similar in form, of various sizes and of various material, are found throughout all Africa. Those made from a long horn-shaped gourd appear to be commonly used for accompaniment at dances and such ceremonials. Others made of horn or ivory, and more shrill in tone, are used for hunting purposes and in war. A horn of the same kind, of ivory, a sort of oliphant in fact, but with the mouth-piece at the side, is considered a royal badge of office, and is only borne by the king's horn-player. The Emir of Nupe, to whom an official visit was made, possessed a singular war-trumpet of metal, perfectly straight in shape, and some six feet long. This trumpet was only sounded by the guards of the Emir, and no person was allowed to possess or construct a similar instrument upon pain of death.

Flutes of various kinds were also met with. Prominent among them was the *lera*, an instrument constructed of a hollow pipe of cane, in the upper side of which finger-holes, varying in number from four to six, had been bored or burnt. At the end of the pipe, upon the upper side, a notch was cut; this notch formed in fact the embouchure, the instrument speaking as an organ pipe, the notch forming the "lip." The tone of the lera was soft and sweet, not unlike the Arabian *nay*. Flutes—played thus *à bec*, and constructed with this notch—appear common throughout Africa, and have been found by various travellers, who have deposited specimens in the British Museum. The notch, however, seems to be peculiar to African flutes.

Another wind instrument was the *furi*. This latter was decidedly pretty in tone, and reminded one of the *ocarina*. It is rather curiously constructed, being made of wood, about six inches in length. It is played with three finger-

holes only, covered respectively by the thumb and finger of the right hand, and the first finger of the left. It is sounded by the open end being blown across in much the same way that a key is whistled by children in this country. Instruments of very similar construction have been noticed by travellers in various parts of Africa, and a comparison with specimens deposited in the British Museum has proved distinctly that the use of this instrument extends to the east coast of Africa. It is, however, without doubt, peculiar to the African continent.

The Transverse Flute, sounded like our own, and held horizontally, was in no instance met with. Flutes containing *whistles*, like the old English recorder, or our common "penny whistle," were also not met with; particular inquiry was in both instances made, but proved fruitless.

Instruments sounded by single or double reeds are distinctly of Mahommedan introduction. Of the single reed type there was no specimen discovered; but the ordinary reed pipe or primitive *oboe*, played with a double reed and common in Egypt, Arabia, and India (where it is known as the *surnai* or *nâgasara*), was frequently met with, but never in any but Mahommedan hands. These pipes were found of various sizes, and the reed was usually provided with a metal shield against which the lips were pressed; the reed consequently was not controlled by the lips in any way, and the sound was harsh and strident.

An instrument called *to* was also met with. This is a sort of Jew's harp, and is constructed of a wooden bow, the ends of which are kept bent by means of a string of creeper fibre. When played this string is placed between the lips of the performer, who, with a short piece of stick held in the right hand, strikes the string, at the same time holding the bow at the far end with his left hand. He also holds in his left hand a short stick, which he keeps pressed

loosely against both bow and string. This would appear to be identical with the "Bimbia" harp, described by Commander Allen,[1] and it is worthy of note that a somewhat similar instrument is employed by the Kaffirs in southern Africa.

Instruments of Percussion.—Of these there are many examples. The drum, however, would seem to be chiefly confined to Mahommedan users. Of drums proper, the most interesting that were met with were of a long hour-glass shape, the heads having a diameter of about a sixth of the length of the instrument. These drums were of wood, with parchment heads, tightened by a multitude of twisted leather braces; sometimes gourd bodies were employed. A stone was placed inside these drums. When played the drum was hung over the left shoulder, the drum itself being below the arm; the head was struck with a wooden stick formed like a hook, and with a flat disc-shaped end. The elbow was pressed against the braces, and as the drum was sounded a variation in the pitch was thus produced at the will of the player. When shaken the stone inside caused the instrument to sound.

These drums were found all along the Kworra, and the perpetual noise they occasioned frequently rendered night hideous. The profession of drummer seems to be fairly lucrative, and affords a livelihood to numbers of men at each village.

A rather different drum, made entirely of wood, and employed chiefly in houses by women and children, was also found. This wooden drum is evidently indigenous, and is usually about a foot and a half in length, hollowed out

[1] "A Narrative of the Expedition sent by Her Majesty's Government to the River Niger in 1841, under the Command of Captain H. D. Trotter." Captain William Allen, R.N. London, 1848.

inside, and contains a small aperture at one side. It is known by the name of *ufie*. The other drums employed, called *okanga*, are made of wood or gourd bodies, and have skin heads, but no braces; they consequently cannot be tuned except by heat, or by being damped with water. The skin drums are beaten both by hand and stick, the wooden ones only by stick.

Rattles of various kinds are met with, and are used chiefly as a means of marking the rhythmical accompaniments to songs and dances. An instrument of iron, shaped somewhat like a bell, and called *agogo*, is also to be found. It is sounded by being struck with a metal bar, and is held suspended from the hand. In sound it resembles the noise made by striking an ordinary blacksmith's anvil.

It is somewhat curious to find that the *marimba* or *harmonicon*, consisting of thin slabs of wood placed upon gourd resonators, and found so freely all over Africa, was not to be met with in the Niger Territories. Special inquiries were made for this instrument, but in all cases they proved to be fruitless. The only instrument of the harmonica kind to be met with was the usual *tsztze*, called also *igedegbo*, formed of a sound board or box of wood, upon which are placed thin strips of a hard wood, very tough and elastic, of various lengths, which are secured by means of fibres firmly twisted round their lower ends. These strips of wood are roughly tuned to the required intervals, and possess a certain degree of sonority. When played the instrument is held in one hand, the thumb and finger of the other depressing and releasing the vibrating strips of wood.

The use of this instrument is universal throughout Africa. Specimens which have been brought from various parts, and can be compared in almost all important museums, attest the truth of this. It is curious to note here that this

instrument is figured by Bonanni in his "Gabinetto Armonico" (1722).

MUSIC AND DANCING.

Native music may be classed under three heads:—(1) dance music; (2) sacred or religious music, which is often combined with the first; (3) music for recreation, usually consisting of amusing songs. All up the Niger and its tributary rivers, the natives take great pleasure in singing, dancing, and in fact in music generally. The prevailing voice among men seems to be a sort of high baritone, and among women a contralto. In both sexes the voice, usually loud and clear, is yet capable of much modulation, and during the moonlit evenings the greater part of their time is spent in singing and dancing. Among the Asaba people, who may be taken as a sample, musically speaking, of the natives of the Niger Territories, the dance-music consists usually in a solo being taken by one voice, the others following it with a chorus or refrain: the actual dancers meanwhile perform in front of the musicians. This solo and chorus is repeated for about ten minutes, or possibly longer. After the singing the dancers perform by themselves very vigorously for some three or four minutes. After a pause a fresh dance commences. Some of the dance melodies are sung in unison; others in parts at the interval of a third. It is interesting to note the employment of sequences of major and minor thirds, or perhaps even neuter. This latter is but a permissible conjecture, since reliable evidence as to the scale system in use in the Niger Territories was not forthcoming. A preference for the minor third is rather noticeable, especially at the conclusions. Some of the melodies are sung as a chorus, others as a solo and chorus. The accompaniments to these dances are chiefly rhythmical. The use of the drum is not common, the instrument being generally

reserved for religious and funeral ceremonies. The gourd trumpet or horn, called *akpale*, and previously described, is generally employed; and, to mark the rhythm, either a basket rattle, iron jingle sounded with a wooden striker, or a flat leather clapper is used. Drums are, however, of general use in religious ceremonials, and at such times the noise occasioned by these instruments is incredible, and is only to be compared to that heard amongst the Tiers and Nayars on the Malabar coast of India, where relays of performers are provided to continue the drumming for days without ceasing! Everywhere the natives sing whilst at their work, for they are naturally of a very cheerful disposition; they have, however, no songs which can be said to be peculiar to their various occupations. The musical performances at occasions of worship depend as a rule upon the decision of their "doctor" or fetish man. Sometimes such music is accompanied by drums and other noisy implements; at others it consists simply of singing, the rhythm being marked by clapping of hands. In all cases dancing is very vigorously carried on during the music, and is so universal that it may be said to be the exception when music is heard unaccompanied with dancing in some form. There are war-dances, which are solemn and rather noisy performances, and danced entirely by men. Women never join in war-dances unless the "doctor" has expressly enjoined them to do so. Then there is the hunting-dance, which takes place on occasions of national sport; it is danced only by those who take part in the chase, and under no circumstances are women allowed to join. It is accompanied by the beat of drums and singing alone—movements of animals being imitated by those performing.

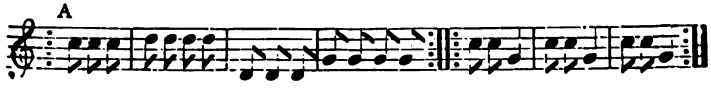
The usual dance for village recreation is called in the language of the country the "play dance;" it is the dance preferred by the present generation, and is performed princi-

pally by young men and girls. The rhythm of all dances is more or less irregular, and suggests the steps of the dancers; there seems to be a sort of traditional custom as to these steps, but evidently the dancers are guided by no fixed rules.

Music is of course mixed up with many curious traditions, and is regarded as being of divine origin. The Asaba people say that music was first brought into the country by a hunter named Orgardié, a native of Ibuzo, upon his return from an expedition in search of big game. Orgardié having lost his way in a thick forest, was surprised at hearing sounds of music; he accordingly concealed himself and discovered that the music proceeded from a party of forest spirits that were approaching. From his hiding-place, Orgardié managed to hear and observe sufficient to enable him to remember the steps of the dances, and the music of the songs sung; and upon his return to his village he taught his countrymen this music, which was called *Egu olo*. From Ibuzo music was imported to Asaba land. The belief in these wood spirits is universal; indeed every fresh dance or song is believed to have been first heard by hunters during their expeditions in the jungles, and attributed to the forest spirits.

A few specimens[1] of the airs of the country will now be given:—

1. A SACRED SONG.

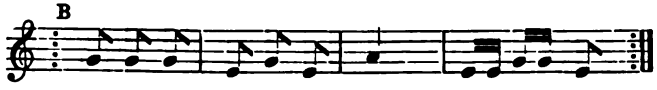


(A.) *Anasi gana gana—Kpokradin.* This song is sung

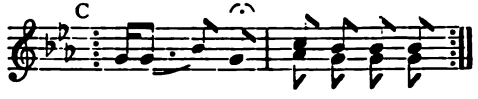
[1] In the following examples the time signatures have, from want of space, been omitted. As will be noticed, several of the melodies employ a mixed time of alternate bars of triple and common time. With this explanation the proper interpretation of the melodies is simple, the rhythm being for the most part regular throughout.

at the time of eating new yam, the native New Year, and therefore a time of great solemnity. Upon this day it is usual to offer a sacrifice, which ceremony takes place about 5 P.M., in the presence of the king, queens and household. After the sacrifice, upon the return of the royal procession, this song is sung and accompanied by the wooden drum called ufie, as noticed previously. The word *anasi* means "queen;" the other words are merely imitative of the beating of the drum.

2. War Songs and Dances.

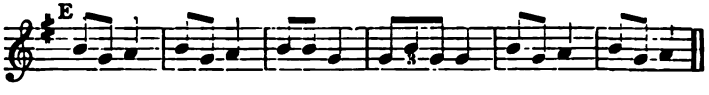


(B.) *Iogolama*, a chorus. At the conclusion of a war a dance takes place. Those who have succeeded in returning with the head of an enemy sing thus:—"With our feet we went to war; we return with our feet and also with the head of an enemy. Iogolama."



(C.) *Obinamgbo*, a chorus. "Young men stand fast. Let us drive them before us. Obinamgbo."

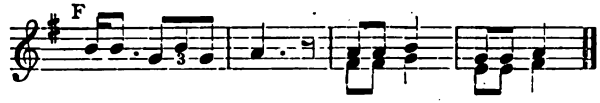
(D.) *Deemenu*, "Let us thank the brave warriors. Hayah."



(E.) *Okume.* During battle any warrior who slays his enemy cuts off his head, and brandishes it aloft, exclaiming, "Okume!" A song of incitement to battle.

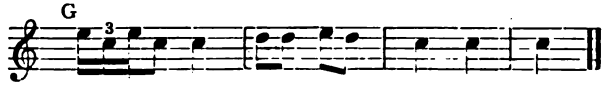
3. Hunting Songs and Dances.

F



(F.) *Atu ga ri abo.* A call of the hunter to the buffaloes to come and show themselves in answer to the report of a gun.

G



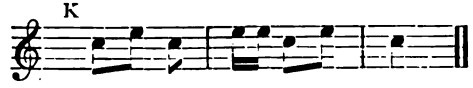
(G.) *Umudiabia ga guluegu.* A challenge from the hunters to the beasts of the forest. "Beasts of the forest, come forth to the dance." Usually danced with gestures imitative of the various ways different animals are approached, the performers having guns loaded with blank.

H

(H.) *Anu ozo bia,* "Let some fresh animal approach." A song of triumph from a hunter who has bagged his game, and is ready awaiting other.

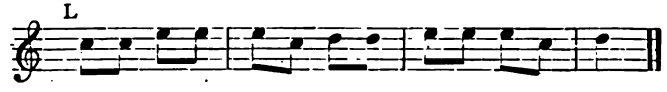
4. Cradle Songs.

K

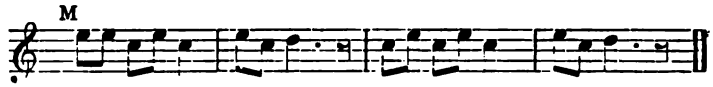


(K.) *Dededâ,* "Walk along, baby." Sung to a child when it first begins to walk.

L



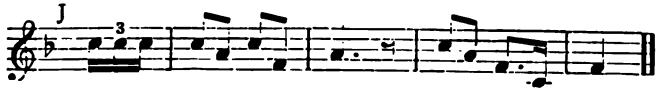
(L.) *Delele mando,* "Sleep, baby, sleep." A lullaby.



(M.) *Nei je ubom,* "Mother is gone to the sand-banks." A lullaby. These sand-banks are the usual market-places, and women frequently therefore repair there, leaving their children at home in charge of friends.

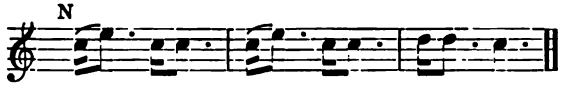
5. Love Songs.

(I.) *Okolobia glade egu,* "Young men hold the dance." A song of boasting, of the young men to the girls. "Without us, a dance loses its attractions." Evidently the dancing man in Africa is not unique in his ideas upon the subject.

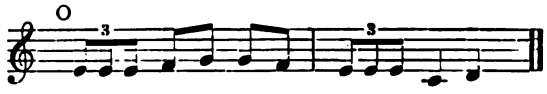


(J.) *Egu oma,* "A good dance." The words of the song refer to a young man, much in love, called Ofiri, and son of a man of position. The moral implied, therefore, is that the sons of wealthy men have, as a rule, little difficulty in making their way in the world.

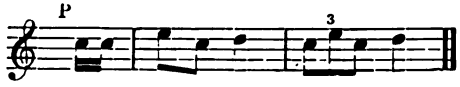
6. Funeral Songs.



(N.) *Koko anu,* "Gather yourselves together." Chorus, *Koko bene.* A song for gathering together the family of the departed to mourn for the dead.

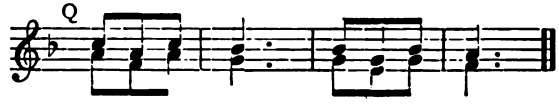


(O.) *Udene ga bulu ozo,* "Women, come help to carry the dead." A call to the women to prepare for the burial of the dead and to join in the procession.

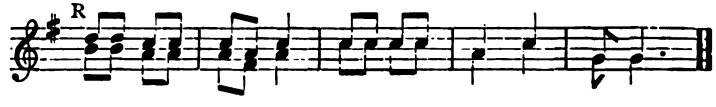


(P.) *Ogiri keke,* "A woman who surpasses a man." The meaning being a woman of wealth or influence. A song sung at the death of women of position.

7. Funeral Procession Songs.



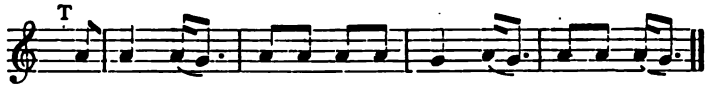
(Q.) *Yokogo.* A song at an ordinary funeral procession, and accompanied with drums.



(R.) *Onwu bulu eze ayin,* "Death has deprived us of our king." Sung at the deaths of kings or great chiefs.

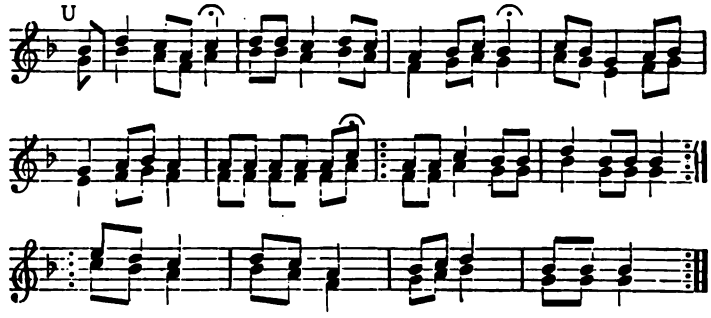
8. Canoe Songs.

(S.) *Dama Dama Dakerio.*

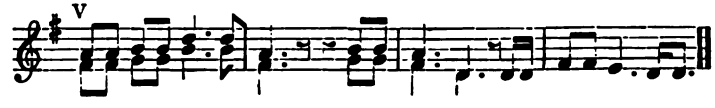


(T.) *Adam Biko.* Two ordinary canoe songs sung by both men and women when paddling. Of Abo origin, they are sung by the Asabas and Onitshas, and in fact all the tribes upon the banks of the Delta rivers.

9. Popular Songs and Dance Music.



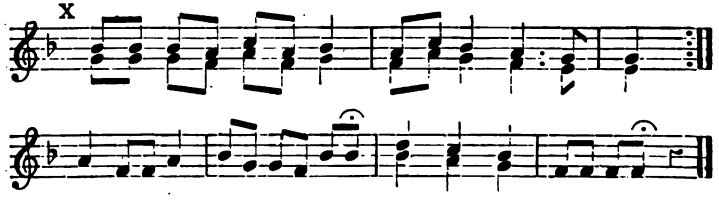
(U.) *Okuyagi.* Okuyagi is considered to be the name of a foreigner residing in Asaba land, and a native of the village Okue. Okuyagi was of a somewhat reserved nature, and consequently little liked by his acquaintances. During his absence, on an expedition into the interior, news of his death was reported. This ballad was composed in remembrance of him—"Okuyagi, of Okue Town, the shooter, the quarrelsome, no more will he return to Asaba: he has been shot. Good-bye."



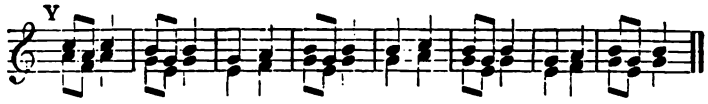
(V.) *Nwanjogu*, i.e., son of Ojogu. This song treats of one Ayo the son of Ojogu, a young man, and very popular

as a dancer. A dance was held at Okpanam, a town in Asaba land. During the entertainment Ayo's dancing was considered so far superior to any one else's, that the young women of the place all fell in love with him at once. The young men thereupon became jealous, and so wished him a hasty farewell. One of them, a namesake of his, with a few armed followers, attacked him on his way home. However, Ayo drew his weapon, and the courage of the other immediately evaporated, and he sang, "Touch me not, but depart in peace." Hence this song was composed, "Ayo has vanquished Ayo. Let him depart in peace. Farewell."

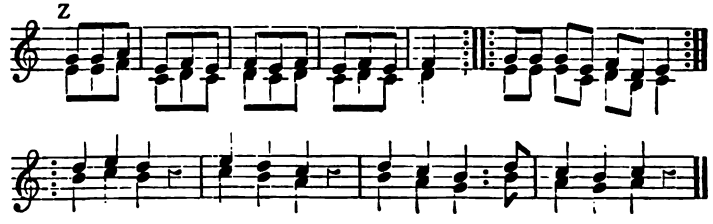
(W.) *Mbiriba*, "The best dancer." A song making fun of a young man who always dances alone when every one else has finished; as if in fact he was showing the other dancers the proper steps.



(X.) *Orgardiegbeni*. A traveller from Asaba land was lost in the forest. While there he heard the forest spirits singing and dancing. Concealing himself in a tree, he observed them closely, and upon his return home he taught others the songs and dances he had heard. The names of those who thus learnt were Oku Opa, Ubido, Ibuzo, Invanono, Ikpoazu, and Ekule. When this song is performed the dancers put on masks representing these people.



(Y.) *Ogbuka.* A young woman went into the forest for wood. She fell amongst the wood spirits, and her ears were cut off by them. Upon her return home, when the villagers heard that she had been with the wood spirits, she was told she must return to them again. She made, however, a last request, that she should be allowed to sing what she had heard in the forest. And so she sang—"Kiokogo, Kandi nogbuka, had a child, he was rich, he planted yams for himself and his family," &c.



(Z.) *Akele.* A little girl was left behind in the plantations, upon the return of the villagers at night-fall. The wood-spirits found the child, and kept her for some time; whilst with them she learnt this song. Before the wood-spirits sent her home, they enjoined her not to sing this song until after four days had lapsed. However, being pressed by the villagers, the child forgot her promise and sang; the result was that she died the same day. And this was the song—"The year that the song Akele was sung, the English came to Asaba. A good song is brought to the king's house. We have finished. Akele."

APPENDIX.

I.

(A.)—A NATIVE'S[1] HISTORY OF LOKOJA.

CHIEF OKI, a native of Okpoto, for some cause or another removed from his home and came to Dere, from thence to Ribo, and afterwards he crossed over to the present town of Lokoja, which was then but a farm. There was, however, a small village near the water. It was called Panda, after the name of a shrub which grew plentifully on the spot. The inhabitants of this village were farmers and dyers of cloth. On the top of Mount Patte there was at that time a large town, Okenka by name, which was the capital of the country. The country was very strong, having many powerful kings, the names of some of whom were Omdakiselu (*i.e.*, he that multiplies), Amanajokpa (he that gathers to kill), his brother Amanasubu, Amanagbhongboro, Asama, and Udina.

On Oki's arrival, about the year 1825, he built for himself a town south of Okenka and called it Olokoja (*i.e.*, the strong). The town soon grew in size. After Oki, his son Ogori became chief, and after him, his brother Aro; another of Oki's sons was called Haya, and he was the father of the chief Salamaleiku.

About 1839 Masaba, then a prince of Nupe, having got information about the people of the Lokoja district, came and invaded them. He made his camps on the site of the present town, and the campaign lasted seventeen months. Twelve war-chiefs and their soldiers were defeated, whereupon Masaba sent out a thirteenth war-chief, who by treachery managed to get the people to surrender. Most of the inhabitants, however, left the country, and returned to their original homes in the Basa country; those that remained rallied round Salamaleiku and established a stronghold on Mount Patte.

In 1841 an expedition came from England and made a station near Lokoja, and when the Englishmen went away a native agent was left in charge. The news about this soon reached Osman Saki, Emir of Nupe, and he, being greatly alarmed, sent to suppress it. Some more Englishmen visited Lokoja, but did nothing there; then, in 1860,

[1] Mr. John, native lay missionary, of Sierra Leone.

there came an expedition under Dr. Baikie. They were shipwrecked above Jeba, and encamped for a year at Rabba and wished to establish a station there, but Masaba, who was then Emir of Nupe, ordered the expedition to leave the place and go down the river to Lokoja, where, he said, they could stay; so in 1862 Lokoja was reoccupied by the English.

Baikie pitched his tent on a hillock under Mount Patte and began to gather round him as many natives as possible, so as to form a settlement. There were some emigrants from Sierra Leone and Lagos, who had come by land with Glover; these formed the beginning of the place. Then the doctor redeemed a number of slaves and gave them names of Christians, as well as his own name, such as Abraham Baikie, Rose Baikie and Simeon Saido Baikie; after this he endeavoured to induce the tribes on Mount Patte to come down, and, after many fruitless attempts, he persuaded the chief, Aduka, to pay him a visit. This man, the son of Haya and grandson of Oki, although a pagan, greeted the doctor with the Arabic salutation, "Salam Aleiku," and Baikie ever after called him by the surname "Salamaleiku." This chief was induced to leave the hill, and, with all his people, to settle in the town, and a separate quarter was given to them, which, even to this day, is called "Salamaleiku's town." These wild men became good farmers, and faithful to Dr. Baikie and his successors.

The doctor was respected greatly by the neighbouring chiefs, who came to him for advice, and he was a great friend of Masaba, who used to send to him to say that Baikie was King of Lokoja, as he (Masaba) was of Bida. Natives from afar came to settle at Lokoja, but Baikie was very careful as to what people he received into his settlement. He liked the Hausas and their language, and he was pleased to receive them into his town, persuading all the different people under him to converse in the Hausa language, which he himself studied deeply.

The ransomed slaves were supported on the system of issuing rations to them every Saturday, in the same manner as was done by the English Government to the first freed slaves at Sierra Leone. This system at Lokoja produced idleness, and therefore, after the death of Dr. Baikie, Vice-Consul Fell made the people work on the farms for their food.

Dr. Baikie may be considered the founder of Lokoja, as well as the first English consul. After his death several naval and civil officers were appointed to act for a longer or shorter period, including the following—Lieutenant Bouchier, R.N., T. V. Robins, Paymaster Maxwell, W. Fell, and J. Edwards. The first real consul appointed by the English Government was, however, Lyons M'Leod, ex-consul for Mosambique, and W. Fell was his vice-consul. Great were the hopes entertained by the rising community of Lokoja at these first regular and, as was supposed, permanent appointments, but unforeseen events

soon happened which marred all our future hopes, and ended in the abolition of the consulate altogether to this day.

In 1868 Bishop Crowther was captured by a heathen chief, and Vice-Consul Fell volunteered his life to rescue him, and perished after having nobly accomplished his task. In the same year Consul M'Leod, by greatly exceeding his powers, created an alarm, which ended in his being recalled by the Foreign Office, and the next year the consulate was abolished. After M'Leod's departure, Black and Dixon had charge of Lokoja for a short time, but at last, by orders from England, sold the consul's house to a trading firm.

During the earlier years of the consulate, steamers with mails and provisions came seldom. The visit of a man-of-war was short and only occasional, and when the merchants' steamers began to ply, they came late and went away early, from fear of being stranded for a whole year, as was the case with some of them. In consequence of all this the consuls were obliged to live on native diet, but they sometimes sent letters by land to Lagos for provisions. So anxious were these isolated and lonesome officials, that when it was thought that a steamer was about due, a handsome reward was offered to the first person who, from the top of the surrounding hills, spied out a steamer and reported it immediately to the consul. A proclamation of the reward used sometimes to be made a week before the arrival of the steamer.

Vice-Consul Fell and his assistant, Valentine Robins, laid out the town in beautifully-clean streets, forty feet wide, and compensated those whose houses were destroyed. But after the removal of the consulate the town relapsed into its former filthy condition, its streets becoming over-grown with weeds and encroached on by native huts, except the street in front of the lower mission-house, near which the natives were forbidden to build.

The consuls formed prisons, and punished crime according to its desert. Thieves were chained in couples to clean the streets, and flogged publicly in the market-place. No case of murder ever occurred in these days in Lokoja. Consul M'Leod had a body-guard of twelve men of the Lagos Hausa Constabulary, under a sergeant and a corporal; these men, however, sometimes behaved badly, and on one occasion, even under the very eyes of the consul, broke into mutiny and ran away to the hills with their arms.

On the withdrawal of the consuls, several heathen chiefs, who had dreaded their power and influence, now began to be jealous of the growing importance of the settlement. The pretext for this was that, while the consuls were at Lokoja, the heathen tribes were free from the oppression of the Filani government, but now the Emir Masaba, having to protect British interests at Lokoja, sent there a detachment of soldiers, who took advantage of the opportunity to make kidnapping excursions among the heathens. And so, instead of protecting us, they

gave so much trouble that we were obliged to complain of them to the Emir and request him to withdraw them altogether from Lokoja.

The Emir complied with the request of the Sierra Leone emigrants, on behalf of the whole community, and withdrew the main body of the troops with their commander; but a small portion of the force remained, who continued to carry on their plundering raids. This so exasperated the surrounding tribes that, in unison, they decided to make one great effort to get rid of, not only their immediate oppressors, but also the place from which they used to sally forth on their marauding expeditions, *i.e.*, Lokoja. This was the cause of the ceaseless struggles which the young and rising settlement had to pass through for many an anxious year.

The Sierra Leone emigrants formed themselves into a body for the security of their lives and property, and made further complaints to Masaba about the conduct of his soldiers, but he only said that he was too far away from Lokoja to look after it properly, and therefore, if the inhabitants wished for further protection, they must remove from Lokoja to Mount Elphinstone. We all objected to this and, in the autumn of 1870, when Lieutenant Molyneux passed through Lokoja, on the annual official visit to Bida, we petitioned him to persuade Masaba to afford us protection. Bishop Crowther went with him to Bida, and Masaba gave in at once, and appointed Mr. Jacob Meheux, a government interpreter, his agent at Lokoja, to look after the welfare of the place. For some time we lived quietly and comfortably, Meheux settling all disputes with native chiefs, but in 1873 fresh troubles arose. A neighbouring rebel chief, having revolted from his master, fled with his followers towards Lokoja, intending to burn and plunder it. The Nupes and Yorubas, dwelling at Lokoja, on hearing of the enemy's approach, fled, and the defence of the town was left in the hands of the mercantile agent, the mission agents, and Meheux, with a small force of Hausas. Meheux led the attack on the enemy, and routed the rebel chief and his men with great loss. After the repulse of this strong enemy, the news of which spread far and wide among the surrounding disaffected tribes, we have had rest up to this day.

(B.)—DECREE OF MASABA, EMIR OF NUPE, REGARDING LOKOJA.

BE it known to the agents of the merchant factories, the missionary station, all English subjects, settlers, and natives residing at Lokoja.

1. That in order to organise a better state of management in settling affairs in the above settlement for the time being, in the absence of a

resident British consul, I have appointed Jacob Meheux (Musa), government interpreter, sub-manager for the settlement of Lokoja.

2. I have authorised him to report to me any acts of oppression of any one, which may tend to disturb the peace of the settlement, the cultivation of the land, or retard the prosperity of trade.

3. It is my expressed wish that the settlement of Lokoja should be well populated as a chief mart at the confluence; and to confirm this I invite all those who have deserted it from fear of molestation to return to their houses and resume their farming occupation as usual. In assurance of their future safety, I have delivered to the commander the woman who had fled from Lokoja to take refuge at Olumoye, but unfortunately taken prisoner there, to be restored to the relatives.

4. It is my order that all residents at Lokoja of what tribe soever they be, should act unitedly as my police guard for the protection of the settlement after affairs are settled and my troop withdrawn from the camp.

5. To support Jacob Meheux (Musa) the sub-manager, in his office, I request the co-operation and assistance of the resident mercantile agents and the advice of the missionaries when needed, that my wishes may be carried out to the advantage of the settlement.

BIDA, *September 12th*, 1870.

Arabic signature of Masaba, Emir.

(Signed) S. A. CROWTHER, Bishop, Niger Territory. } *Witness.*

(C.)—TRANSLATION OF A HAUSA'S ACCOUNT OF HIS SERVICE WITH ENGLISHMEN IN THE NIGER,

1857–1864.

"WE arrived at Lokoja in 1857 and proceeded to Rabba. From Rabba we went to Geba in the *Dayspring*. Here our steamer was wrecked, having struck upon a rock. We therefore landed and encamped in the place for a year. While we were there, Lieutenant Glover and I went to Boussa and purchased some horses and returned to the camp. Afterwards Glover went to Lagos by land on horseback. He went and returned by land. After some time we came to Bida to salute Masaba. After this we removed from Geba, the *Sunbeam* taking us to Rabba, which we made our residence. While we were at Rabba much talk arose surmising the Nupes creating wrong notions about us. They said that the Hausa men, whom Lieutenant Glover had brought from Lagos, were those who had fought with them, Ulmoru being the leader. For this reason King

Masaba said to us, 'Lest the Nupes should cause any misunderstanding between you and myself, you had better leave this place and go down river.' So the *Rainbow* brought us to Odokodo (Kporo). Laird's factory had been at Gbebe, but on our arrival at Odokodo and, on account of frequent conflagrations at Gbebe, it was removed to Odokodo. We spent a whole year there. It was in 1859 and in 1860 Dr. Baikie removed to Lokoja because Odokodo was too swampy. We then made our stay here, holding friendly intercourse with the King of Bida. He said we might stay at Lokoja. It was he who drove away the original inhabitants, and therefore the place was his. In the year 1861, the *Sunbeam* brought news of the death of Mr. Laird, and therefore the factories were all taken away. There had been a factory at this place, one at Onitsha, and one at Aboh. We still remained here, Mr. Dalton, Dr. Baikie, and myself, together with the Hausas whom we had brought from Lagos. In the year following we went to Kano, and left this place in charge of Abigeh. After we had left, the steamer *Investigator* arrived here with goods and provisions. The commander, Lefroy, refused to leave them here, supposing that Dr. Baikie was dead. He left them at Rabba and went and informed King Masaba of them at his camp at Kontogora, the boundary between Nupe and Kambari. He very kindly kept the goods safe until our return from Kano. We also went and met the King at his camp at Kontogora, when he spoke to us and apologised to the doctor, requesting him to leave Lokoja and return to Rabba and settle there. He said it was the Nupe people who had been making all these complications, but that he found the ways of white men to be good. But the doctor declined, and said that Lokoja was good enough.

"In 1864, he (Baikie) said he wished to go and see his father. Mr. Glover also sent to say he should go away, for he had already stayed here too long. So he went. On his departure, Lieutenant Bouchier was appointed to take charge of Lokoja. In this way was the settlement established."

(D.)—GUNU, THE CHIEF HEATHEN DEITY OF THE KWORRA AND THE CONFLUENCE.

THE worship of Gunu is carried on in Nupe, Igara, Igbira, and Basa, as well as in the states of Yauri and Gbari, and is said to have been introduced about 150 years ago[1] by an Igara king.

Gunu is believed to be the spirit of some ancestor of the Igaras, and is looked on as the great dispenser of every blessing, but more especially

[1] Nupe at that time was a province of Igara.

as the giver of children. An annual festival takes place in its honour at the end of January or the beginning of February and lasts for ten days, there being great feasting and drinking accompanied by dancing and merriment. Gunu inhabits certain groves in the country, and thither, during the festival, large wooden bowls of cooked food and pots of native beer (made from *holcus sorghum*) are carried for the propitiation of the deity, men praying on this occasion for fruitful crops (since Gunu is considered to be the controller of the elements), while childless women pray that their lot may be changed.

As has been mentioned, there is a great mortality from various causes among the children in these countries, therefore should a woman who has had the misfortune to lose all her children in infancy succeed in rearing one, she prefixes to its name that of Gunu, and so among Nupes we frequently find such names as Gunu-Kolo, Gunu-Jia, and Gunu-Kashi, their possessors being much respected, and deemed to be gifts from the great Gunu.

II.

NUMERALS.

No.	*Hausa.*	*Nupe.*	*Yoruba.*	*Fula.*
1	Daia	Nini	Eni, Aka	Göo
2	Biu	Guba	Eji	Didi
3	Uku	Guta	Eta	Tati
4	Fudu	Guni	Eri	Nai
5	Bial	Gutsu	Aru	Guwi
6	Shida	Gutsuai (5 upon 1)	Efa	Gego (5 upon 1)
7	Bokoi	Gutuaba (5 upon 2)	Eje	Gedidi (5 upon 2)
8	Tokos	Gututa (5 upon 3)	Ejo	Getati (5 upon 3)
9	Tara	Gutuani (5 upon 4)	Esa	Genai (5 upon 4)
10	Goma	Guwo	Ewa	Sapo
11	Goma Sha Daia	Guwo be Nini	Okola	Sapo E Göo
12	Goma Sha Biu	Guwo be Guba	Ejila	Sapo E Didi
13	Goma Sha Uku	Guwo be Guta	Etala	Sapo E Tati
14	Goma Sha Fudu	Guwo be Guni	Erila	Sapo E Nai
15	Goma Sha Bial	Goji	Edogu (5 from 20)	Sapo E Guwi
16	Goma Sha Shida	Goji Be Nini	Eri Di Logu (4 from 20)	Sapo E Gego
17	Goma Sha Bokoi	Goji Be Guba	Eta Di Logu (3 from 20)	Sapo E Gedidi
18	Ishirin Biu Babu (20 minus 1)	Eshi Di Guba (20 minus 2)	Eji Di Logu (2 from 20)	Sapo E Getati
19	Ishirin Daia Babu (20 minus 2)	Eshi Di Nini (20 minus 1)	Oka Di Logu (1 from 20)	Sapo E Genai
20	Ishirin	Eshi	Ogu	Nogas
21	Ishirin Da Daia	Eshi Be Nini	Oka Le Logu	Nogas E Göo
22	Ishirin Da Biu	Eshi Be Guba	Eji Le Logu	Nogas E Didi
23	Ishirin Da Uku	Eshi Be Guta	Eta Le Logu	Nogas E Tati
24	Ishirin Da Fudu	Eshi Be Guni	Eri Le Logu	Nogas E Nai
25	Ishirin Da Bial	Eshi Be Gutsu	Edogbo (30 minus 5)	Nogas E Guwi
26	Ishirin Da Shida	Eshi Be Gutsuai	Eri Di Logbo	Nogas E Gego
27	Ishirin Da Bokoi	Eshi Be Gutuaba	Eta Di Logbo	Nogas E Gedidi
28	Talatin Biu Babu (30 minus 1)	Gbonwo Di Guba (30 minus 2)	Eji Di Logbo	Nogas E Getati

NUMERALS—*continued.*

No.	*Hausa.*	*Nupe.*	*Yoruba.*	*Fula.*
29	Talatin Daia Babu (30 minus 2)	Gbonwo Di Nini (30 minus 1)	Oka Di Logbo	Nogas E Genai
30	Talantin	Gbonwo	Ogbo	Gapande Tati (10 times 3)
31	Talatin Da Daia	Gbonwo Be Nini	Oka Le Logbo	Gapande Tati E Göo
32	Talatin Da Biu	Gbonwo Be Guba	Eji Le Logbo	Gapande Tati E Didi
33	Talatin Da Uku	Gbonwo Be Guta	Eta Le Logbo	Gapande Tati E Tati
34	Talatin Da Fudu	Gbonwo Be Guni	Eri Le Logbo	Gapande Tati E Nai
35	Talatin Da Bial	Rundi	Aru Di Logoji (5 from 40)	Gapande Tati E Guwi
36	Talatin da Shida	Rundi Be Nini	Eri Di Logoji	Gapande Tati E Gego
37	Talatin Da Bokoi	Rundi Be Guba	Eta Di Logoji	Gapande Tati E Gedidi
38	Arbain Biu Babu (40 minus 2)	Shiba Di Guba (40 minus 2)	Eji Di Logoji	Gapande Tati E Getati
39	Arbain Daia Babu (40 minus 1)	Shiba Di Nini	Oka Di Logoji	Gapande Tati E Genai
40	Arbain	Shiba (2 twenties)	Ogoji (2 twenties)	Gapande Nai (10 times 4)
41	Arbain Da Daia	Shiba Be Nini	Oka Le Logoji	Gapande Nai E Göo
42	Arbain da Biu	Shiba Be Guba	Eji Le Logoji	Gapande Nai E Didi
43	Arbain Da Uku	Shiba Be Guta	Eta Le Logoji	Gapande Nai E Tati
44	Arbain Da Fudu	Shiba Be Guni	Eri Le Logoji	Gapande Nai E Nai
45	Arbain Da Bial	Shiba De Gutsu	Aru Di Ladota	Gapande Nai E Guwi
46	Arbain Da Shida	Shiba Be Gutsuai	Eri Di Ladota	Gapande Nai E Gego
47	Arbain Da Bokoi	Shiba Be Gutuaba	Eta Di Ladota	Gapande Nai E Gedidi
48	Hamsin Biu Babu	Arata Di Guba	Eji Di Ladota	Gapande Nai E Getati
49	Hamsin Daia Babu	Arata Di Nini	Oka Di Ladota	Gapande Nai E Genai
50	Hamsin	Arata	Adota	Gapande Guwi
51	Hamsin Da Daia	Arata Be Nini	Oka Le Ladota	Gapande Guwi E Göo
55	Hamsin Da Bial	Arata Be Gutsu	Aru Di Logota	Gapande Guwi E Guwi
59	Settin Daia Babu	Shitta Di Nini	Oka Di Logota	Gapande Guwi E Genai
60	Settin	Shitta	Ogota	Gapande Gego
61	Settin Da Daia	Shitta Be Nini	Oka Le Logota	Gapande Gego E Göo
65	Settin Da Bial	Shitta Be Gutsu	Aru Di Ladori	Gapande Gego E Guwi
69	Sabain Daia Babu	Adori Di Nini	Oka Di Ladori	Gapande Gego E Genai
70	Sabain	Adori	Adori	Gapande Gedidi
80	Tamanin	Shini (4 twenties)	Ogori	Gapande Getati
90	Tissain	Shini Be Guwo (4 twenties and 10)	Adoru (20 times 5 minus 10)	Gapande Genai
95	Tissain Da Bial	Shisu Di Gutsu	Aru Di Logoru	Gapande Genai E Guwi
100	Dari, or Deri	Shisu	Ogoru (20 times 5)	Temedere
120	Dari Da Ishirin	Shisuai	Ogofa	Temedere E Nogas

NUMERALS—*continued.*

No.	*Hausa.*	*Nupe.*	*Yoruba.*	*Fula.*
130	Dari Da Talatin	Shisuai Be Guwo	Adoje	Temedere E Gapande Tati
140	Dari Da Arbain	Shituaba	Ogoje	Temedere E Gapande Nai
150	Dari Da Hamsin	Ogboguni Di Guwo	Adojo	Temedere E Gapande Guwi
160	Dari Da Settin	Ogboguni	Ogojo	Temedere E Gapande Gego
170	Dari Da Sabain	Ogboguni Be Guwo	Adoso	Temedere E Gapande Gedidi
180	Dari Da Tamanin	Guasa, Ogosa	Ogoso	Temedere E Gapande Getati
190	Dari Da Tissain	Kpako Di Guwo	Ewa Di Lugba	Temedere E Gapande Genai
200	Metin	Kpako	Igba	Temede Didi
240	Metin Da Arbain	Kpako Be Shiba	Eji Lugba	Temede Didi E Gapande Nai
250	Metin Da Hamsin	Kpako Be Arata	Adota Le Lugba	Temede Didi E Gapande Guwi
300	Dari Uku	Kpako Be Shisu	Oduru	Temede Tati
400	Dari Fudu, or Arbamiya	Kpoba	Iriwo	Temede Nai
500	Dari Bial, or Hamsamiya	Kpoba Be Shisu	Odegbeta	Temede Guwi
600	Dari Shida	Kpota	Egbeta	Temede Gego
700	Dari Bokoi	Kpota Be Shisu	Odegberi	Temede Gedidi
800	Dari Tokos	Kpaguni	Egberi	Temede Getati
900	Dari Tara	Kpaguni Be Shisu	Odegberu	Temede Genai
1000	Dubu, or Zambar	Kposu	Egberu	Wulure
2000	Dubu Biu, or Alfin	Gba	Egba	Guluge Didi
3000	Dubu Uku, or Talata	Gba Be Kposu	Egbedogu	Guluge Tati
4000	Dubu Fudu, or Arba	Gboba, or Gba Guba	Egbaji	Guluge Nai
5000	Dubu Bial, or Hamsa	Gboba Be Kposu	Egbedogbo	Guluge Guwi
6000	Dubu Shida, or Zambar Shida, or Sitta	Gbota, or Gba Guta	Egbata	Guluge Gego
7000	Dubu Bokoi, or Zambar Bokoi, or Sabaa	Gbota Be Kposu	Odegbari	Guluge Gedidi
8000	Dubu Tokos, or Zambar Tokos	Gbaguni	Egbari	Guluge Getati
9000	Dubu Tara, or Zambar Tara	Gbaguni Be Kposu	Odegbaru	Guluge Genai
10,000	Dubu Goma, or Zambar Goma	Gbagusu, or Gbosu	Egbaru	Geluge Sapo, or Ugunere, or Ugunade
20,000	Dubu Ishirin, or Zambar Ishirin	Gbaguwo	Egbawa	Guluge Nogas

III.

THE ROYAL NIGER COMPANY (CHARTERED AND LIMITED).

Royal Charter.

Victoria, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith. To all to whom these presents shall come greeting :—

Whereas an humble petition has been presented to us in our Council by the National African Company (Limited), of 34 to 40 Ludgate Hill, in the City of London (hereinafter referred to as "the Company").

And whereas the said petition states (among other things) that the petitioner Company was incorporated in the year 1882, under the Companies Acts, 1862 to 1880, as a company limited by shares. And that the capital of the company is £1,000,000, divided into 100,000 shares of £10 each with power to increase. And 91,675 of such shares have been subscribed for and issued, and a further 6000 of such shares have been subscribed for and are about to be issued, making in all 97,675 of such shares. And that the objects of the Company as declared by the memorandum of association of the Company are (amongst others) the following, that is to say :—

To carry on business and to act as merchants, bankers, traders, commission agents, shipowners, carriers, or in any other capacity in the United Kingdom, Africa, or elsewhere, and to import, export, buy, sell, barter, exchange, pledge, make advances upon, or otherwise deal in goods, produce, articles, and merchandise, according to the custom of merchants, or otherwise.

To form or acquire and carry on trading-stations, factories, stores, and depôts in Africa or elsewhere, and to purchase, lease, or otherwise acquire, carry on, develop, or improve any business or any real or personal property in the United Kingdom, Africa, or elsewhere, or any undivided or other interest whatsoever therein respectively.

To apply for, acquire, and hold any charters, Acts of Parliament, privileges, monopolies, licenses, concessions, patents, or other rights or powers from the British Government, or any other

government or state, or any potentate, or local or other authority in Africa or elsewhere; to exercise, carry on, and work any powers, rights, or privileges so obtained; and to constitute or incorporate the Company as an anonymous or other society in any foreign country or state.

To purchase or otherwise acquire, open, and work mines, forests, quarries, fisheries, and manufactories; and to stock, cultivate, and improve any of the lands of the Company, erect buildings thereon, and sell the produce thereof.

To do all other things whatsoever, whether of the like or other nature, which the Company may consider in any way incidental or conducive to the foregoing objects or any of them.

And whereas the petition further states that the kings, chiefs, and peoples of various territories in the basin of the River Niger in Africa, fully recognising, after many years' experience, the benefits accorded to their countries by their intercourse with the Company and their predecessors, have ceded the whole of their respective territories to the Company by various acts of cession specified in the schedule hereto.

And whereas, in consideration of such cessions, the Company agreed, amongst other things, not to interfere with any of the native laws and not to encroach on or to interfere with any private property, unless the value should be agreed upon by the owner and the said Company and payment made of such value.

And whereas the petitioners further state that the Company, since their incorporation, have been actively engaged in carrying into effect the objects stated in the aforesaid memorandum of association, and have purchased the business of all European traders in the regions aforesaid, and are now the sole European traders there, and are now engaged in developing the resources of such regions and in extending trade further into the interior.

And whereas the petition further states that the Company and their predecessors, whose businesses they purchased, have, during many years past, expended large sums of money and made great exertions in and about acquiring the confidence of the said native kings, chiefs, and peoples, which have resulted in the said cessions of territory, and large expenditure will be incurred in carrying the same into effect and discharging the obligations arising thereunder.

And whereas the petition further states that the condition of the natives inhabiting the aforesaid territories would be materially improved, and the development of such territories and those contiguous thereto, and the civilisation of their peoples would be greatly advanced if we should think fit to confer on the Company, and the petitioner Company therefore most humbly pray that we will be graciously pleased to grant, by our Royal Charter, authority to accept the full benefit of the several cessions aforesaid, and all such other powers and

authorities in relation to the premises as to us may seem meet, subject nevertheless to such conditions as we may think fit to impose.

And whereas the petition further states that if such authority were conferred on the petitioner Company they would thereby be enabled to render to our dominions services of much value, and to promote the commercial prosperity of many of our subjects.

Now, therefore, we, having taken the said petition into our royal consideration, in our Council, and being satisfied that the intentions of the petitioner Company are praiseworthy and deserve encouragement, do hereby will, ordain, grant, and declare as follows, that is to say :—

Authorisation to Company.

1. The said National African Company, Limited (in this our charter referred to as "the Company"), is hereby authorised and empowered to hold and retain the full benefit of the several cessions aforesaid, or any of them, and all rights, interests, authorities, and powers for the purposes of government, preservation of public order, protection of the said territories or otherwise, of what nature or kind soever, under or by virtue thereof, or resulting therefrom, and ceded to or vested in the Company in, over, or affecting the territories, lands, and property comprised in those several cessions, or in, over, or affecting any territories, lands, or property, in the neighbourhood of the same, and to hold, use, enjoy, and exercise the same territories, lands, property, rights, interests, authorities, and powers respectively for the purposes of the Company and on the terms of this our Charter.

Fulfilment by the Company of Promises given.

2. The Company shall be bound by and shall fulfil all and singular the stipulations on their part contained in the acts of cession aforesaid, subject to any subsequent agreement affecting those stipulations approved by one of our principal Secretaries of State (in this our charter referred to as "our Secretary of State").

British Character of the Company.

3. The Company shall always be and remain British in character and domicile, and shall have its principal office in England; and its principal representative in the territories aforesaid, and all the directors shall always be natural born British subjects, or persons who have been naturalised as British subjects, by or under an Act of Parliament of our United Kingdom.

Restriction of Transfer by Company.

4. The Company shall not have power to transfer, wholly or in part, the benefit of the cessions aforesaid, or any of them, except with the consent of our Secretary of State.

FOREIGN POWERS.

5. If at any time our Secretary of State thinks fit to dissent or object to any of the dealings of the Company with any foreign power, and to make the Company any suggestion founded on that dissent or objection, the Company shall act in accordance therewith.

SLAVERY.

6. The Company shall, to the best of its power, discourage, and, as far as may be practicable, abolish by degrees any system of domestic servitude existing among the native inhabitants; and no foreigner, whether European or other, shall be allowed to own slaves of any kind in the Company's territories.

RELIGIONS OF INHABITANTS.

7. The Company as such, or its officers as such, shall not in any way interfere with the religion of any class or tribe of the people of its territories, or of any of the inhabitants thereof, except so far as may be necessary in the interests of humanity; and all forms of religious worship and religious ordinances may be exercised within the said territories, and no hindrance shall be offered thereto except as aforesaid.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE TO INHABITANTS.

8. In the administration of justice by the Company to the peoples of its territories, or to any of the inhabitants thereof, careful regard shall always be had to the customs and laws of the class, or tribe, or nation to which the parties respectively belong, especially with respect to the holding, possession, transfer, and disposition of lands and goods, and testate or intestate succession thereto, and marriage, divorce, and legitimacy, and other rights of property and personal rights.

TREATMENT OF INHABITANTS GENERALLY.

9. If at any time our Secretary of State thinks fit to dissent from or object to any part of the proceedings or system of the Company relative to the people of its territories, or to any of the inhabitants thereof, in respect of slavery or religion, or the administration of justice, or other matter, and to make to the Company any suggestion founded on that dissent or objection, the Company shall act in accordance therewith.

FACILITIES FOR BRITISH NATIONAL SHIPS.

10. The Company shall freely afford all facilities requisite for our ships in the harbours of the Company.

FLAG.

11. The Company may hoist and use on its buildings, and elsewhere

in its territories, and on its vessels, such distinctive flag indicating the British character of the Company as our Secretary of State and the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty shall from time to time approve.

General Powers of Company.

12. The Company is hereby further authorised and empowered, subject to the approval of our Secretary of State, to acquire and take by purchase, cession, or other lawful means, other rights, interests, authorities, or powers of any kind or nature whatever, in, over, or affecting the territories, lands, or property comprised in the several treaties aforesaid, or any rights, interests, authorities, or powers of any kind or nature whatever, in, over, or affecting other territories, lands, or property in the region aforesaid, and to hold, use, enjoy, and exercise the same for the purposes of the Company, and on the terms of this our charter.

Questions of Title.

13. If at any time our Secretary of State thinks fit to object to the exercise by the Company of any authority or power within any part of the territories comprised in the several cessions aforesaid, or otherwise acquired by the Company, on the ground of there being an adverse claim to that part, the Company shall defer to that objection.

Prohibition of Monopoly.

14. Nothing in this our charter shall be deemed to authorise the Company to set up or grant any monopoly of trade; and subject only to customs duties, and charges as hereby authorised, and to restrictions on importation similar in character to those applicable in our United Kingdom, trade with the Company's territories under our protection shall be free; and there shall be no differential treatment of the subjects of any power as to settlement or access to markets, but foreigners alike with British subjects will be subject to administrative dispositions in the interests of commerce and of order.

The customs duties and charges hereby authorised shall be levied and applied solely for the purpose of defraying the necessary expenses of government, including the administration of justice, the maintenance of order, and the performance of treaty obligations, as herein mentioned, and including provision to such extent and in such a manner as our Secretary of State may from time to time allow for repayment of expenses already incurred for the like purposes or otherwise in relation to the acquisition, maintenance, and execution of treaty rights.

The Company from time to time, either periodically or otherwise, as may be directed by our Secretary of State, shall furnish accounts and particulars in such form, and verified in such manner as he requires, of the rates, incidence, collection, proceeds, and application of such

duties, and shall give effect to any direction by him as to any modification of the description, rate, incidence, collection, or application of any such duties.

CONFORMITY TO TREATIES.

15. The Company shall be subject to and shall perform, observe, and undertake all the obligations and stipulations relating to the River Niger, its affluents, branches, and outlets, or the territories neighbouring thereto, or situate in Africa, contained in and undertaken by ourselves under the General Act of the Conference of the Great Powers at Berlin, dated the twenty-sixth February, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Eighty-five, or in any other treaty, agreement, or arrangement between ourselves and any other state or power, whether already made or hereafter to be made.

FOREIGN JURISDICTION.

16. In all matters relating to the observance of the last preceding article, or to the exercise within the Company's territories for the time being of any jurisdiction exercisable by us under the Foreign Jurisdiction Acts, or the said General Act of the twenty-sixth February, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Eighty-five, the Company shall conform to and observe and carry out all such directions as may from time to time be given in that behalf by our Secretary of State, and the Company shall, at their own expense, appoint all such officers to perform such duties and provide such courts and other requisites for the administration of justice as he directs.

GENERAL PROVISIONS.

And we do further will, ordain, and declare that this our charter shall be acknowledged by our governors, and our naval and military officers, and our consuls, and our other officers in our colonies and possessions, and on the high seas and elsewhere, and they shall severally give full force and effect to this our charter, and shall recognise and be in all things aiding to the Company and its officers.

And we do further will, ordain, and declare that this our charter shall be taken, construed, and adjudged in the most favourable and beneficial sense for and to the best advantage of the Company, as well in our courts in our United Kingdom, and in our courts in our colonies or possessions, and in our courts in foreign countries or elsewhere, notwithstanding that there may appear to be in this our charter any non-recital, mis-recital, uncertainty, or imperfection.

And we do further will, ordain, and declare that this our charter shall subsist and continue valid, notwithstanding any lawful change in the name of the Company, or in the articles of association thereof, such change being made with the previous approval of our Secretary of State signified under his hand.

And we do lastly will, ordain, and declare that, in case at any time it is made to appear to us in our Council expedient that this our charter should be revoked, it shall be lawful for us, our heirs and successors, and we do hereby expressly reserve and take to ourselves, our heirs and successors, the right and power, by writing, under the Great Seal of our United Kingdom, to revoke this our charter, without prejudice to any power to repeal the same by law belonging to us or them, or to any of our courts, ministers, or officers, independently of this present declaration and reservation.

SCHEDULE OF TREATIES.

One	dated	January	31, 1884.	One	dated	October	13, 1884.
One	„	August	20, 1884.	One	„	„	15, 1884.
One	„	„	28, 1884.	One	„	„	16, 1884.
One	„	„	29, 1884.	Two	„	„	21, 1884.
One	„	„	30, 1884.	Two	„	„	22, 1884.
One	„	September	20, 1884.	Two	„	„	23, 1884.
One	„	„	23, 1884.	One	„	„	25, 1884.
One	„	„	24, 1884.	One	„	„	26, 1884.
One	„	„	25, 1884.	One	„	„	27, 1884.
One	„	„	27, 1884.	One	„	„	28, 1884.
One	„	„	29, 1884.	One	„	„	29, 1884.
One	„	October	2, 1884.	One	„	„	31, 1884.
Three	„	„	9, 1884.	One	„	November	1, 1884.
Three	„	„	10, 1884.	One	„	„	2, 1884.
Two	„	„	11, 1884.				

In witness whereof we have caused these our letters to be made patent.

Witness ourself at Westminster, the tenth day of July, in the fiftieth year of our reign.

The Great Seal.

By warrant under the Queen's Sign Manual,
MUIR MACKENZIE.

Note.—The above schedule necessarily contains only the treaties made up to the date of the petition (12th February, 1885). A very much larger number of additional treaties had been made during the interval prior to the issue of the charter, covering all the territory on both banks of the Niger (including the Benue and other affluents) which had been left untouched by the treaties in the schedule. These new treaties fall under clause twelve of the charter.

The name of the Company has been changed from THE NATIONAL AFRICAN COMPANY (LIMITED), to THE ROYAL NIGER COMPANY (CHARTERED AND LIMITED), with the previous approval of Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs as required by the charter.

IV.

(A.)— PRESENTS AND EXPENDITURE IN TRAVEL.

THE importance of giving adequate presents to the right people in all West African countries has been frequently referred to, for without a sufficiency of articles, wherewith to fee the various messengers, officials, and rulers, travelling is out of the question. The value of the gift, of course, depends on the rank and standing of the official or chief whom it is desired to propitiate; to some it is sufficient to give a packet of needles or a few yards of cheap cotton stuff, while to others (such as the Mahommedan emirs) handsome presents of English and Oriental goods are necessary. The Ilorin portion of Major MacDonald's mission has been taken as a fair guide for future travellers in the matter of presents and general cost of travelling, and it is hoped that the following list may be of service.

LIST OF GIFTS PRESENTED BY HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT TO THE KING, IMAM, AND CHIEFS OF ILORIN.

	£	s.	d.
1 Ivory-handled sword, gold-plated scabbard, with gold knot	11	10	0
1 Ivory-handled sword, gold-plated scabbard, with gold knot	9	0	0
2 Embroidered saddle-cloths, at £3	6	0	0
2 Embroidered saddle-cloths, at £2, 15s.	5	10	0
2 Musical boxes, at £6, 2s.	12	4	0
3 Broussa prayer carpets, at £4, 16s.	14	8	0
3 Broussa prayer carpets, at £2	6	0	0
2 Broussa portiers, at £4, 15s.	9	10	0
2 Embroidered cloths (Koran inscriptions), at £2 10s.	5	0	0
1 Bagdad embroidered turban cloth	1	13	0
1 Bagdad embroidered turban cloth	0	16	6
1 Indian tent-cover, 30 by 10 feet	2	0	0
2 Gongs and beaters, at £1, 10s.	3	0	0
2 Hand-mirrors, with oxydised silver backs, at 18s. 6d.	1	17	0
2 Daghestan rugs, at £2, 2s.	4	4	0
Carry forward	£92	12	6

	£	s.	d.
Brought forward	92	12	6
2 Tanjore rugs, at £1, 12s. 6d.	3	5	0
4 China silk shawls, at 16s.	3	4	0
2 Indian sarees, gold-embroidered, at £1, 16s. 6d.	3	13	0
2 Pieces rich silk, at £1, 15s.	3	10	0
1 Piece blue embossed, 4⅝ yards	0	15	5
1 Piece rich tapestry	2	2	0
1 Piece rich tapestry	1	5	0
1 Rich chenille cover	1	15	0
2 Pieces silk and wool damask, at £1, 6s.	2	12	0
4 Pieces crimson and silk Rouen silk, at £3, 2s. 6d.	12	10	0
2 Pieces gold brocatelle, 5 yards long each, at £3, 11s. 3d.	7	2	6
2 Pieces blue brocatelle, 2½ yards long each, at £1, 15s. 8d.	3	11	4
2 Pieces crimson and embossed velvet, 4⅜ yards each, at 10s.	1	0	0
2 Pieces crimson silk plush, 4 yards each, at 19s. 11d.	1	19	10
2 Pieces crimson and gold tabourette, 12 yards, at £2, 6s. each	4	12	0
Total	£145	9	7

Note.—The above goods were carefully selected in England prior to the departure of the Mission, and packed in tin-lined cases.

ACCOUNT OF EXPENSES OF VISIT TO ILORIN FROM SEPTEMBER 26th TO AUGUST 9th.

Date.	Expenses incurred.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Sept. 26.	At Idomaji :—						
	2 pieces fancy French stripes, at 2s. 10d.	0	5	8			
	2 pieces red, blue, and white prints, 10 yards, at 3s. 9d.	0	7	6			
	2 heads cowries, at 1s. 3d.	0	2	6			
					0	15	8
„ 27.	At Saraji :—						
	7 pieces red and white marble cloth, at 3s. 6d.	1	4	6			
	7 pieces red, blue, and white corat print, 10 yards, at 3s. 9d.	1	6	3			
	3 pieces blue bronze cloth, at 5s.	0	15	0			
	4 pieces fancy French stripes, at 2s. 10d.	0	11	4			
	6 heads cowries, at 1s. 3d.	0	7	6			
	2 bags, salt, at 5s.	0	10	0			
	5 pieces grey Jacque brocades, at 5s. 6d.	1	7	6			
					6	2	1
	Carry forward				£6	17	9

Date.	Expenses incurred.	Amount. £ s. d.	£ s. d.
	Brought forward . .		6 17 9
Sept. 28.	At Iporin :—		
	5 pieces red, blue, and white corat prints, 10 yards, at 3s. 9d.. .	0 18 9	
	3 pieces blue bronze cloth, at 5s. .	0 15 0	
	2 pieces fancy French stripes, at 2s. 10d.	0 5 8	
	1 piece red and white marble cloth .	0 3 6	
			2 2 11
	En route, crossing Rivers Otshi and Maya, &c. :—		
	1 piece fancy French stripes, 11¾ yards	0 2 10	
	1 piece blue bronze cloth . . .	0 5 0	
	1 piece red and white marble cloth, 12 yards	0 3 6	
	3 pieces fancy prints, 10 yards . .	0 15 0	
	1 piece red, blue, and white corat prints	0 3 9	
	4 heads cowries.	0 5 0	
			1 15 1
„ 29.	At Kalende Farm :—		
	2 pieces red and white marble cloth, 12 yards, at 3s. 6d. . . .	0 7 0	
	2 pieces red, blue, and white corat prints, at 3s. 9d. . . .	0 7 6	
	1 piece fancy French stripes, 11¾ yards	0 2 10	
	1 piece blue bronze cloth . . .	0 5 0	
	1 head cowries	0 1 3	
			1 3 7
Sept. 30 to Oct. 2.	At Ilorin :—		
	2 pieces blue and white domestics, 12 yards, at 3s.	0 6 0	
	2 pieces red and white marble cloth, 12 yards, at 3s. 6d. . . .	0 7 0	
	1 piece feather and buff handkerchiefs	0 2 9	
	2 pieces white croydons plain, 12 yards, at 2s. 3d.. . . .	0 4 6	
	2 pieces fancy prints, 10 yards, at 5s.	0 10 0	
	3 pieces grey Jacque brocades, 10 yards, at 5s. 6d.. . . .	0 16 6	
	1 piece white brocades, 20 yards .	0 12 3	
	Carry forward . .		£11 19 4

Date.	Expenses incurred.	Amount. £	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
	Brought forward . .				11	19	4
Sept. 30 to Oct. 2.	At Ilorin—*continued*:—						
	3 pieces white brilliants, 20 yards, at 7s.	1	1	0			
	2 pieces black and white checks, 12 yards, at 4s. 3d.	0	8	6			
	51 heads cowries, at 1s. 3d. . .	3	3	9			
					7	12	3
Oct. 3.	At Ilorin :—						
	6 heads cowries, at 1s. 3d. . .	0	7	6			
	130 heads cowries, at 7d. . . .	3	15	10			
	4 pieces red, blue, and white corat prints, 10 yards, at 3s. 9d. . .	0	15	0			
	5 pieces red, blue, and white marble cloth, 12 yards, at 3s. 6d. . .	0	17	6			
	1 piece Swiss silk Madras, 12 yards	0	4	3			
	1 piece fancy print, 10 yards . .	0	5	0			
	6 pieces white brilliants, 20 yards, at 7s.	2	2	0			
	4 pieces blue and white checks, 12 yards, at 4s. 3d.	0	17	0			
	1 piece white brocades, 20 yards .	0	12	3			
	2 pieces white croydons, 12 yards, at 2s. 3d.	0	4	6			
	2 pieces feather and buff handkerchiefs, at 2s. 9d. . . .	0	5	6			
	2 pieces royal brocade handkerchiefs, 12 yards, at 4s. 9d. . . .	0	9	6			
	3 pieces red and white pyramid prints, 12 yards, at 4s. 6d. . . .	0	13	6			
					11	9	4
„ 4.	At Ilorin :—						
	2 pieces white croydons, 12 yards .	0	4	6			
	1 piece red, blue, and white prints, 10 yards	0	3	9			
	19 heads cowries, at 7d. . . .	0	11	1			
					0	19	4
„ 4.	At Ilorin (expenses of journey to Yoruba Camp at Ofa) :—						
	1 piece quilts, white	0	9	9			
	8 pieces feather and buff handkerchiefs, at 2s. 9d. . . .	1	2	0			
	Carry forward . .				£32	0	3

Date.	Expenses incurred.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
	Brought forward .	.	32 0 3
Oct. 4.	At Ilorin (expenses of journey to Yoruba Camp at Ofa)—*continued*:—		
	10 pieces red brocade handkerchiefs, 8 yards, at 3s. 3d. . . .	1 12 6	
	5 pieces red and white marble cloth, 12 yards, at 3s. 6d. . . .	0 17 6	
	5 pieces white brilliants, 20 yards, at 7s.	1 15 0	
	7 pieces red brocade handkerchiefs, 12 yards, at 4s. 9d. . . .	1 13 3	
	8 heads cowries, at 1s. 3d. . . .	0 10 0	
			8 0 0
	Paid carriers and boys to camp and and back :—		
	11 pieces Swiss silk Madras, 12 yards, at 4s. 3d.	2 6 9	
	5 pieces royal brocade handkerchiefs, 12 yards, at 4s. 9d. . . .	1 3 9	
	3 pieces white croydons, 12 yards, at 2s. 3d.	0 6 9	
	3 pieces feather and buff handkerchiefs.	0 8 3	
	1 piece marble cloth, 12 yards . .	3 6	
	1 piece black and white checks, 12 yards.	0 4 3	
			4 13 3
„ 5.	At Ilorin :—		
	14 cwt. salt, at 5s.	3 10 0	
	21 pieces royal brocade handkerchiefs, 12 yards, at 4s. 9d. . . .	4 19 9	
	94 heads cowries, at 7d. . . .	2 14 10	
	3 pieces grey Jacque brocades, 10 yards, at 5s. 6d.	0 16 6	
	6 pieces fancy prints, 10 yards, at 5s.	1 10 0	
	2 pieces fancy prints, blue and white, 10 yards, at 5s.	0 10 0	
	6 pieces white quilts, at 9s. 9d . .	2 18 6	
	19 pieces blue and white marble cloth, at 3s. 6d.	3 6 6	
	2 pieces white brilliants, 20 yards, at 7s.	0 14 0	
	Carry forward . .		£44 13 6

Date.	Expenses incurred.	Amount. £	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
	Brought forward				44	13	6
Oct. 5.	At Ilorin—*continued*:—						
	2 pieces white brocades, 20 yards, at 12s. 3d.	1	4	6			
	4 pieces white brocades, 20 yards, at 12s. 6d.	2	10	0			
	2 pieces white croydons, 12 yards, at 2s. 3d.	0	4	6			
	8 pieces apron spot handkerchiefs, 12 yards, at 3s.	1	4	0			
	1 piece striped denims, 12 yards	0	3	3			
	3 pieces royal red brocade handkerchiefs, 8 yards, at 3s. 3d.	0	9	9			
	4 pieces red, blue, and white corat prints, at 3s. 9d.	0	15	0			
	5 pieces red flannel	3	2	6			
	1 piece Swiss Madras handkerchiefs	0	4	3			
	17 heads, 30 strings, cowries, at 1s. 3d.	1	2	0			
					31	19	10
Oct. 6 & 7.	*En route*, for crossing Asa and Otshi:—						
	3 pieces denims, blue and white, at 3s. 3d.	0	9	9			
	1 piece blue bronze cloth, at 5s.	0	5	0			
	1 piece domestics, blue and white, 12 yards	0	3	0			
	1 piece royal brocade handkerchiefs, 12 yards	0	4	9			
	1 piece red and white pyramid prints	0	4	6			
					1	7	0
	At Akayo:—						
	7 pieces blue and white domestics, 12 yards, at 3s.	1	1	0			
	4 pieces grey Jacque brocades, at 5s. 6d.	1	2	0			
					2	3	0
Oct. 8.	At Braima's Farm:—						
	5 pieces red and white pyramid prints, at 4s. 6d.	1	2	6			
	1 piece white brocade, 20 yards	0	12	3			
					1	14	9
„ 9.	At Saraji:—						
	1 piece royal red brocade handkerchiefs, at 4s. 9d.	0	4	9			
	Carry forward				£81	18	1

Date.	Expenses incurred.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
	Brought forward . .		81 18 1
Oct. 9.	At Saraji—*continued* :—		
	31 heads cowries, at 7d. . . .	0 18 1	
	4 pieces denims, blue and white, 12 yards, at 3s. 3d.	0 13 0	
	2 pieces nicanees, red and white (for loan of a horse), at 6s. 6d. . .	0 13 0	
	3 pieces white brocades, 20 yards, at 12s. 3d.	1 16 9	
	8 pieces red and white nicanees, 10 yards, at 6s. 6d.	2 12 0	
	2 pieces red and white corat prints, 10 yards, at 3s. 9d. . . .	0 7 6	
	1 piece nicanees	0 6 6	
	1 piece red and white pyramids .	0 4 6	
	1 piece grey Jacque brocades . .	0 5 6	
			8 1 7
„ 10.	At Shonga :—		
	28 bags salt, at 5s.	7 0 0	
	Paid carriers, horse-boys . . .	26 19 6	
	Hire of three horses	3 13 3	
	15 heads cowries, at 1s. 3d. . .	0 18 9	
			38 11 6
	Gratuity to chiefs	6 0 0	
	Three bullocks	2 15 0	
			8 15 0
	Carriers from Ilorin paid :—		
	7 pieces red and white marble cloth, at 3s. 6d.	1 4 6	
	5 pieces red and blue corat prints, 10 yards	0 18 9	
	4 pieces blue and white domestics, 12 yards, at 3s.	0 12 0	
	41 pieces Swiss silk Madras, at 4s. 3d.	8 14 3	
	70 heads cowries, at 7d. . . .	2 0 10	
			13 10 4
	Horse and incidental expenses, for extra porters and guides, &c. .		10 12 10
	Fee for interpreter		15 0 0
	Total		£176 9 4

Note.—In the column "expenses incurred" are enumerated the various articles used in lieu of money during the Ilorin visit, while in

the right hand column is given the price paid by the Mission to the Royal Niger Company for the several articles.

Nominally cowries are the currency of the country,[1] but Manchester goods pass equally well, therefore, to avoid the immense expense of porterage of such bulky articles as cowries, it was considered more convenient to carry a considerable amount of Manchester goods.

The barter system at first appears most complicated. Everything is based on the value of cowries, and in making purchases with cotton stuffs in a strange village, it is first necessary to know the local value of a "head" of cowries. The Royal Niger Company, for simplicity and uniformity in trading transactions calculate, in Africa, altogether in cowries, for which they have a fixed rate, viz., one shilling and threepence per "head" (2000 cowries); but in the native market cowries can sometimes be purchased as low as sevenpence per "head."

The barter market fluctuates considerably. Sometimes the natives will take nothing but cowries; there will then be a sudden rush on cloth or salt, then perhaps back to cowries, so it is not an easy matter to know with what to be provided.

The average price paid for articles of food in the Ilorin country was as follows:—Bullocks, 18s.; sheep, 6s.; goats, 2s; fowls, 1s. 6d. per dozen; eggs, 1d. per dozen; yams, 2d. per dozen.

(B.)—DECLARATION BY KING ALIHU.

(*Translation.*)

I, ALIHU, Mahommedan emir, son of Emir Sitta, to the Queen of the English Christians.

I have seen her Commissioner, Major MacDonald, together with his Vizier, Captain Ferryman. The two came to make a loving treaty of peace, friendship, and commerce.

I. We, the king, priests, authorities, and people of the Kingdom of Ilorin, and the chiefs of the camp at Ofa, hereby declare that thenceforth there shall be peace, friendship, and commerce between ourselves and all Yoruba-speaking people, of whom the Alafin of Oyo is head, including the Ibadans and those people composing the Ekiti Confederation.

II. We agree that if the Ibadans break up their camp at Ikirun, then, after ten days, we shall break up our camp at Ofa; but if they do not break up their camp, we cannot break up ours.

[1] Amongst the natives themselves, slaves also enter into the currency, for instance, purchases are paid for in cowries up to about twenty bags, beyond that, the amount is reckoned in cowries and paid in slaves, whose value varies from ten to twenty bags.

We write this at Ilorin on the 10th day of the month Safari, 1307 A.H.

Witnessed at Ilorin this 5th day of October 1889.

(Signed) C. M. MACDONALD,
H. B. M.'s Special Commissioner.

" A. F. MOCKLER-FERRYMAN,
Captain, 1st Oxfordshire Light Infantry,
Private Secretary.

I, CHARLES PAUL, native of Yoruba Country, do hereby declare that the above is a correct translation of the statement which King Alihu, Emir of Ilorin, made in the name of himself, his priests, and people, and to which they all gave their consent. Copy in Arabic of the above statement is in the hands of the King.

(Signed) CHAS. PAUL,
Priest in Holy Orders.

V.

IGARA FOLKLORE.

THE Igaras relate the following story in connection with the first Atta of Idah[1]:—In the days when Idah was but a village, a woman from Ohimoje chanced to find her way thither. Whilst there she had occasion one day to visit the neighbouring bush in search of firewood, and, being great with child, brought forth a boy before she could return to the village. Now the woman was afraid to bring her child back with her, so she left it in the bush at the mercy of the wild beasts. It happened that a female leopard, passing that way in search of food, espied the infant, and, taking it up, conveyed it to her lair, where she reared it with her own cubs. The child in time grew up, and the foster-mother, having observed the ways of human beings, was troubled about his nakedness. She, therefore, repaired to the neighbourhood of Idah, and lay in wait for a passer-by. After some time there came a man from the town, and on him the leopard threw herself, carrying off his cloth and cap to her foster-child. As the boy advanced in years, the leopard became anxious that he should associate with human beings, and for this purpose guided him to the outskirts of Idah, where she left him. The young man entered the town, and the first thing that met his gaze was a fight between two of the inhabitants. He at once took upon himself the duties of arbiter, rebuking the one and commending the other. So astonished were the people who had during the incident crowded round him, that they immediately proclaimed him their king, and refused to permit him to leave the town. This was the first Atta, and he married wives of the people, and had children bold and intrepid as leopards. But he was destined to see once again his strange foster-mother. The leopard was about to die, and came to take a last farewell of the child she had reared. The Atta recognised her, and, clinging to her, begged that she would remain with him. This was, however, not to be, for the aged beast, freeing herself, ran to a certain spot in the town, and, throwing herself down, expired. The Atta, following on her tracks, flung himself on the corpse and died also; and the people, finding the two dead bodies, buried them together

[1] This is an almost literal translation of the words of a native of Idah. I have endeavoured to keep as near the original as possible so as to prevent a perversion of the facts narrated.

where they lay, with all the honours due to royalty. The burial spot has ever since been held sacred, and is called Azaina, or the Grave of the Leopard. Here to this day are the Attas of Idah interred.

The leopard is held in great veneration by the Igaras, who call it atta (father), though they do not object to killing it in the chase. When a dead leopard is brought into Idah, it is dressed up in white, and borne on the heads of four men from house to house, amidst singing and beating of drums. Each householder gives a present of cowries or cloth to the owner of the leopard, and at last the carcase is buried with great ceremony and firing of guns. Should this be neglected, the people imagine that the animal's spirit will punish them.

The people of Idah believe that an enemy can never successfully attack their town. There is a monument near the landing-place which the inhabitants consider sacred. Many years ago the country was continually being raided by the tribes of the interior, and in consequence the Atta and his fighting-men were always absent from Idah. When, however, Ajegba came to the throne, he determined to put an end to this state of things at any cost, and hired for the purpose a Mahommedan mallam, paying him an immense sum of money. The mallam was requested to make a charm which would entirely and for ever put an end to wars in the country. Accordingly the Mahommedan priest appointed a day, and ordered a sacrifice on a grand scale on the river bank. The townspeople assembled at the spot, and oxen and goats were slaughtered and placed in a large hole, which had been previously made; Arabic manuscripts, written for the occasion, were strewn in great numbers amongst the dead beasts, and finally the priest demanded that the Atta should sacrifice his virgin child Enekpe. This Ajegba did without hesitation, the girl being then and there buried alive with the other sacrifices. Since that time, say the historians, no enemy has successfully warred against Idah.[1]

Enekpe's grave is still visited at certain periods by the Atta and his people, offerings of corn, wine, and oil being made to propitiate her spirit, and thieves and murderers condemned to death are executed on the spot.

[1] Idah was bombarded and set on fire in October 1883 by three British gunboats, in order to bring the Atta and his subjects to their senses, a fact which has not, however, shaken the belief of the people in their safety, since they give two reasons for the success of their enemies on that occasion, one being that the Atta was absent from the town, and the other that the Mahommedan priest had not made charms to protect the country from white men, as he was ignorant of their existence.

VI.

LIST OF BIRDS.

THE following is a list of the ornithological specimens brought to England by the Mission, which were kindly identified by Dr. R. BOWDLER SHARPE, of the British Museum (Natural History):—

Merops pusillus.*
Spermestes bicolor.
Penthetriopsis macrurus.
Halcyon senegalensis.
Laniarius barbarus.
Eurystomus afer.*
Hirundo domicella.*
Corythornis cyanostigma.
Cisticola strangeri.*
Passer diffusus.
Pyromelana flammiceps.
Pyromelana afra.
Glaucidium perlatum.*
Ceryle rudis.
Chrysococcyx cupreus.
Vidua principalis.
Agdydipua pulchella.
Dendrocygna vidua.*
Parra Africana.*
Musophaga violacea.
Butorides atricapilla.*
Porphyrio alleni.*
Actitis hypoleucos.
Motacilla vidua.
Schizoshis Africana.
Muscicapa modesta.*
Hypochæra ultramarina.*
Urræginthus phœnicotis.*
Lagonosticta minima.*
Hirundo Smithii.*
Alcedo quadribrachys.*
Merops hirundinaceus.*
Plotus levaillanti.*

Note.—Although none of the above were new to science, some few had never been met with previously in the Niger Territories. Had we succeeded in preserving all the specimens procured, our collection would, doubtless, have been a valuable one.

* Presented to the Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, S.W.

VII.

LAGOS TO SHONGA (ON THE KWORRA).

ROUTE RECENTLY TAKEN BY A TRADER.

1st day.	Lagos to Owode, by canoe, 12 hours.
2nd „	Left Owode, 10 A.M. ; arrived Omu at noon, Alate 12.30 P.M., Alawun 3 P.M., Atibah 5.30 P.M., Ode 6 P.M.
3rd „	Left Ode 5 A.M., Openi 6.30 A.M., Oru 9 A.M.
4th „	Left Oru 4 A.M., Aha, Olowah 12.30 P.M., Odo-Omokikire at night.
5th „	All-day journey from Odo-Omokikire to Odo-Omonla.
6th „	Reached Ibadan 7.30 A.M.
7th „	Ojo 8 A.M., Moniyah 10 A.M., Olorisha-Oko 11.40 A.M., Ajibade noon, Alabatah 2.30 P.M., Ijayi 4 P.M.
8th „	Fidite 9 A.M., Oyo 1.30 P.M.
9th „	Left Oyo 6.30 A.M., Obah noon, Ajawah 3 P.M., Abayari 4.30 P.M., Roti 6.30 P.M.
10th „	Left Roti at 9 A.M., Ogbomasho, Obere, Ologun, Gbede, Budo-Egbah, Alabatah, Odo-Omo.
11th „	Left Odo-Omo at 8 A.M., Oba-Ni-Sua at 11.30 A.M.
12th „	Short day's journey from Oba-Ni-Sua to Ilorin.
13th „	Left Ilorin 5.30 A.M., Iporin 6 P.M.
14th „	Left Iporin 6 A.M., Saraji 1 P.M.
15th „	Left Saraji 6 A.M., Idomaji noon, Shonga 4 P.M.

Note.—Besides the above (which is fairly direct) there are numerous other trade-routes through Yorubaland, from the coast to the Kworra.

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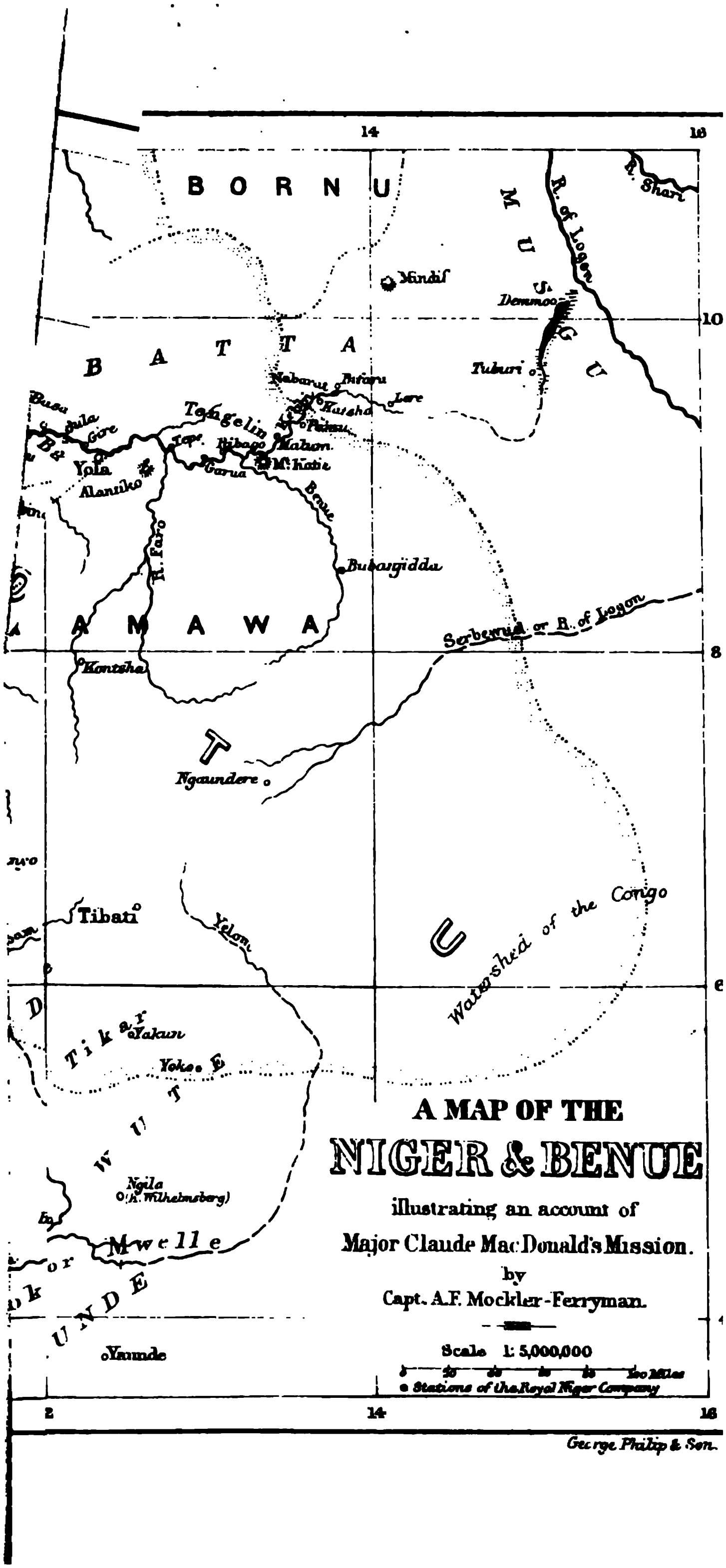
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